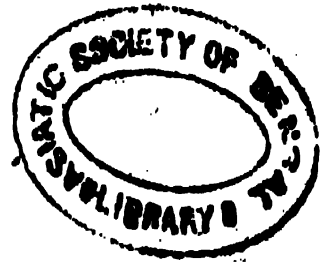


TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES
IN
THE PERSIAN PROVINCES
ON
THE SOUTHERN BANKS OF
THE CASPIAN SEA.

WITH
AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

SHORT NOTICES ON THE GEOLOGY AND COMMERCE OF PERSIA.



BY JAMES B. FRASER,
AUTHOR OF "NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY INTO KHORASÂN," AND
"TRAVELS IN THE HIMĀLĀ MOUNTAINS."

PREFACE.

THE following work is chiefly the narrative of a journey through some parts of Persia very little known. It may be considered as a continuation of Travels formerly published by the Author, with this difference, that the present Volume consists more of personal adventures, and dwells less on statistical and historical details.

In the Appendix will be found a geological sketch, which, though not so full as could be wished, may interest readers who are aware how very little is known respecting the physical structure of those distant countries.

A few particulars are also added in the form of Tables, with observations on each, relating to the commercial resources of Persia. The habitual jealousy and distrust of Asiatics, render it difficult for a traveller to procure authentic information on any topic ; but the Author has reason to believe that reliance may be placed on the statements alluded to.

Many details are given in the course of this narrative, which at first sight may seem insignificant ; but it has been thought right to be as circumstantial as possible, in describing the manners of a people so seldom exposed to the inspection of European eyes.

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ERRATA.

- Page 5. line 22. for "Marunderān," read "Mazunderān."
 17. line 4. for "Nohundeh," read "Nokudeh."
 25. line 8. for "prophets," read "prophet."
 37. line 20. for "thirty-five and forty," read "thirty-five or forty."
 93. line 7. from bottom, delete "easy."
 96. line 5. add a period after "ranks."
 107. line 18. after "The mehmandar," insert "who."
 153. the paragraph beginning, "The terms of money lending," should come after that ending, "within its walls."
 196. line 5. for "Khorasān," read "Khorasān."
 215. line 17. for "place," read "plan."
 380. line 7. from bottom, for "Suffeerood," read "Suffeedrood."
 286. line 4. from bottom, for "I left him," read "I left the Ketkhodah."
 318. line 4. for "Schnart," read "Selmast."
 334. line 8. from bottom, for "drown," read "brown."

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES

ON THE

SHORES OF THE CASPIAN SEA.

CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S PREVIOUS TRAVELS, AND HIS ARRIVAL AT ASTRABAD. — HIS PARTY DESCRIBED. — MUSTAPHA KHAN THE GOVERNOR. — VISIT OF AN ASTRABAD PEDANT. — THE DEAD BODY OF A NOBLE CAPTURED BY THE TOORKOMANS. — ITS VALUE TO THE CAPTORS. — ALARM OF FIRE. — CITY OF ASTRABAD DESCRIBED. — ITS REPUTED ORIGIN. — APPEARANCE. — STREETS. — BAZARS. — PALACE. — FACE OF THE COUNTRY AROUND.

IN the year 1821, being desirous of visiting Persia on my way from India to England, I availed myself of my acquaintance with the late Dr. Andrew Jukes, to accompany him on a mission with which he was charged, from the government of Bombay to the court of Tehran; but that gentleman having unfortunately died at Ispahan, upon his way, I proceeded to Tehran, carrying with me the dispatches intended for the Persian court, which were delivered into the hands of Henry Willock, Esq., *chargé d'affaires* to His Britannic Majesty.

Having resolved to visit the remote province of Khorasān, and, if possible, to penetrate into the countries to the north east of it, I left Tehran in December 1821, accompanied by Meerza Abd-ool-Rezāk, a Persian of good family, considerable liberality of sentiment, and respectable mental endowments; attended also by my faithful

negro John, and four Persian servants. The Meerza was, in truth, my companion, and I hoped to gain much information from his intelligence, his quickness of observation, and his knowledge of the people and their language.

Our party, after encountering various detentions and some hazards, reached Mushed, the capital of Khorasān, early in February 1822, where we remained six weeks, in hopes of being able to cross the desert to visit Bockhara and Samercand, which cities were the grand object of our wishes. But the disturbed condition of the country, which had totally put a stop to all intercourse by caravans, the only practicable mode of travelling in these quarters, rendered further progress in that direction impossible. We were, therefore, forced reluctantly to turn our steps homeward; but we resolved that it should be by a new track, and accordingly proceeded by Koordistan, a district of Khorasān, bordering on the great desert, through the once populous and fertile plains of Gourgaun, to Astrabad, at the south east corner of the Caspian sea: thence we proposed to shape our course through the provinces of Mazunderān and Gheelān, which border its southern shores, to Azerbijan, and its capital Tabreez, the seat of government of Abbas Meerza, Prince Royal of Persia.

In the travels through Khorasān already published, the course of our party has been given, with a description of the countries through which we passed, until reaching Astrabad, we entered a region differing entirely in its nature from all we had heretofore seen: and which, after passing through the turbulent and rebellious province of Khorasān, might have been deemed comparatively secure.

On the 6th April 1822, we entered Astrabad, and remained there until the 15th of the same month; during a great part of which time the weather was damp and rainy; the clouds hung low on the hills, throwing a heavy gloom over all the landscape, and prevented us equally from making many of the observations we required, and from taking long excursions out of doors.

On the second day of our stay I visited Mustapha Khān, the governor of the town, who, however, did not appear disposed to pay

much attention to his guests ; for it was not until long after I had taken up my quarters in the lodging which he himself had provided, that he thought of making any enquiry after my health or wants ; and although repeatedly told that I did not require soorsaut, as the entertainment supplied for guests, or servants of government, by the villages, on the part of the king is called, and which should be, but seldom is allowed for to them, in their annual account of taxes, he shuffled about it, in a manner which sufficiently proved that he would gladly have had the credit, without the expence of being hospitable.

After a considerable time, his brother, attended by several of the chief persons of the town, came to pay me a visit, and to see the curiosities I was reported to possess ; but the conduct and conversation of these good people only served to confirm the correctness of that character, which I had commonly heard attributed to the people of Astrabad, of churlish manners, ignorance, and bigotry. The greater part of them never having quitted their native town, had seen nothing even of the Persian world ; but wrapped in admiration of their own orthodoxy and wisdom, affect to treat strangers in general, and particularly those whose creed or opinions differ in any degree from theirs, with profound contempt.

It was, I believe, with a view to perplex and confound me, that the governor or his brother one day sent one of their chief worthies to visit me ; his name was Seyed Ahmed, a young scholar of high repute in his own city for talents and learning ; deeply read, it was said, in all the sciences that are taught in the East ; and though only twenty years of age, during which period he had never left Astrabad, quite equal, as his admiring townsmen believed, to dispute the palm of acquirements, and knowledge, with the most learned men of the age. His coming was announced to me with studied solemnity, by some of his humble admirers ; his approach was made known by a bustle and fracas ; and he entered my room with an air of pompous abstraction, that, with the foregoing preparation, formed an amusing climax ; it was evident from every motion of his countenance, as well as from his first expressions, that he came in all his panoply of

learning, bursting with a mass of freshly crammed, but ill digested reading, to put us all to shame and confusion.

He commenced operations by attacking some observations which Meerza Abd-ool-Rezāk had made ; and uttered, in support of his opinions, a most sonorous rhapsody, of which I could follow but little. The meerza, suppressing a smile, asked his antagonist, whether the effusion which he had just heard was to be found in books, or was an effort of his own genius ; to which the young man conceitedly replied, that books, to be sure, had their value, though they often spoke obscurely ; that opinions not to be found in writing might be not the less correct ; and that he, for his part, had learnt to think and speak for himself. But the look of derision which the meerza could not suppress seemed to alarm the young professor, and he thought fit to change the subject.

He now put a series of questions to me regarding astronomy ; and upon my venturing to hint some doubts as to the correctness of the Persian notions upon such subjects, he stopped me short, assuring me in a tone of condescension, that all these matters had been demonstrated beyond contradiction, and might easily be made plain to any man of sense ; “ I will undertake to prove,” added he, “ every thing that is advanced, to your own satisfaction, if indeed “ you have capacity to understand it.” I bowed to conceal a laugh at this speech, and begged him to proceed, which he did, by repeating to me very gravely, and in a tone which proved how vast he thought his own knowledge, the ordinary principles of Eastern astronomy ; — that the universe is composed of the four elements, fire, air, earth, and water ; that the masses of these are concentric, and surround each other ; the earth being the innermost, the water next covering the earth, then the air, and beyond that the fire. I stopped him here, and entreated that he would explain to me how these things, particularly the last, was to be proved ; but our learned friend’s forte was neither definition nor demonstration ; such he begged again to assure me was the order of nature, but he could get no further. The meerza and I stuck to our point, and would only admit demonstrated facts ; so that weary of being constantly brought back

to the point whence he set out, he gave the matter up, with an affected smile at our obstinacy and ignorance ; observing at the same time to his companion, while he indicated me with a motion of his head, “ that person has some turn for astronomy, but he is too self-opinionated to learn ; he would be a clever fellow if he would but listen to instruction ! ” He considered my sextant attentively and long, asked many idle questions regarding it, and ended by observing in profound Arabic, that it was really a neat pretty thing of the kind. Soon after this he took his leave, preserving in his countenance and carriage the same lofty contempt with which he entered, and quitted us, probably, not less discomposed than we on our part were entertained with this specimen of Astrabad science.

We had other visitors, however, during our stay, of a more pleasing description, and from one person who had frequently visited the cities of Khyval and Bockhara, I obtained some interesting information respecting these places. We understood, too, that reports were prevalent of a coalition having been formed between the Tuckeh Toorkomans and the Uzbecks, for invading Khorasān ; and that several thousands of these united marauders were already on foot for that purpose : various rumours were also in circulation of Chappows, or plundering expeditions in the vicinity of Shahrood, and it was stated that a caravan from Marunderān, carrying, among other valuable commodities, the dead body of some great person from that quarter, had fallen into their hands. On hearing this I laughed, and observed that the body would hardly repay the captors for their trouble. “ Ah, you mistake,” cried the relater, “ it would be worth to them at least 20,000 tomauns, or about 11,000*l.* sterling ; for the son, or the brother, or the next of kin, whoever he might be, could never permit the body of his relative to be buried in a land inhabited by infidel soonies, and would be forced to ransom it at any rate the captors might demand. Not long ago,” continued he, “ a similar accident occurred, and the relative of the deceased being unable or unwilling to go to the full extent of the ransom required, purchased back an arm only, for which he paid 1,000 Khorasānee tomauns, about 1,400*l.* sterling, and which was duly carried to

"Mushed to be interred there as representative for the whole person."

This anecdote, though somewhat ludicrous at first sight, affords a striking proof of the power of the religious prejudices of this people; it is to be wished that their religion were more effectual to promote good deeds and charitable feelings towards their fellow creatures, and that they were more apt to extend to their relatives while alive, the pious offices which superstition and pride combine to wring from them to the dead.

On the evening before we quitted Astrabad we had a serious alarm. The chimney of our cook-room, which had been partly constructed with reeds covered with clay, took fire by the blaze of some wood burning in the fire-place, and communicating with the wooden frame of the roof, threatened to consume the whole building. To add to the dilemma, there was no visible way to the top of the house, nor had we any vessels or other means of conveying water to the parts on fire. The natives who came into the court upon hearing the bustle, either looked in stupid apathy, or ran about in confusion, without attempting any thing effectual; and had there been a breath of wind nothing could have saved the house; perhaps a great part of the town might have been destroyed. For some time we remained, as may be conceived, in a very painful state of anxiety, when at length one of the Prince's attendants, who was lodged in another part of the house, showed us a place from whence we could find access to the roof; by this way my negro servant, John, accompanied by Seyed Allee, one of my Persian attendants, mounted immediately, tore down the tiling, and so judiciously applied the small quantity of water that could be furnished by means of the cooking pots and other vessels, that the fire was presently extinguished.

It may not be uninteresting in this place to say a few words of this city, which has been believed to owe its origin to Yezsid-ibn-Mehclub, an Arab chief of great celebrity.*—While this prince was

* This great general, who flourished in the end of the first and beginning of the second century of the Hegira, commanded the armies of Solymaun, Seventh Caliph of the Ommiades, in Khorasān, which he reduced to obedience. He conquered the city and

halting during his progress through the country at a village named *Isterick* or *Asterick*, which then occupied a portion of the scite now covered by the city of Astrabad, a treasure of forty earthen vessels full of gold and silver, and bound together by a chain, was dug up from the earth within its walls ; and was by him directed to be laid out in building a city which inherited the name of its obscure predecessor.

The circuit of the present city is about three miles and a half ; and it is surrounded with a wall of mud, once lofty, thick, and formidable, strengthened by numerous towers, and defended by a wide and deep ditch ; but the wall has mouldered down to a mere mound of earth, upon which has lately been raised a parapet, of height sufficient to screen a man, and little more than a foot thick, loop-holed for musketry, and serving to connect such of the towers as yet remain, or have been rudely repaired ; the ditch is nearly filled up with rubbish, and in most places has been converted into rice fields. It is needless to add, that the whole would prove quite indefensible against troops of the least resolution.

In former times the city was still more extensive, and the wall embraced within its circuit a strong fort called Kallah Khundān ; but Nadr Shah, jealous probably of its strength, and of the disposition of the inhabitants to rebel, ordered the fort to be demolished, and the town to be contracted to its present limits. Like most cities in Persia, the greater part is in ruins, and there are not now more than from two to three thousand houses within its walls.

The appearance of Astrabad differs from that of cities in the southern and more elevated provinces of Persia, as much as that of the respective surrounding countries from each other. Not only

territory of Jorjaun, then an independent state under the rule of a prince designated Meerzabaun ; and advanced into Teberistān and Deylem, divisions of the ancient Hyrcania ; at which period tradition supposes him to have laid the foundations of Astrabad. The life and exploits of Yezzed-ibn-Mehlab may be found at length recorded in D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, and Price's *History of Mahomedanism*, vol. i. p. 462. et seq. : — the latter author follows the Tareek-e-Tebree, and Kholaussut-ul-Akbaur, and designates him "Yezzed the Son of Mohilleb." He was killed in battle, A. Heg. 102.

does the forest or the thicket approach on every side to the very ditch, but the extensive gardens and numerous trees which are mingled in all quarters with the buildings of the place, produce a very agreeable and varied effect, in opposition to the monotonous and sterile aspect of the grey mud-walls and roofs of the southern towns and villages. The houses, too, are picturesque and pleasing, both in shape and colour : they are constructed chiefly of wood, and frequently furnished with verandahs resting upon wooden pillars. The style of their architecture is light and open, more in the Indian than the Persian taste ; the roofs raised to a pitch are covered sometimes with red tiles, sometimes with thatch, and extend far beyond the walls. Many houses are fitted up with lofty baugeers, literally " wind-catchers," square towers having openings on each side that act like windsails, conducting the wind into the rooms of a house, and which are used in many eastern towns, as Bushire and Bussora. They are built in the shape of towers, roofed with tiles, and produce an enlivening effect, equivalent to that of spires, in the landscape. There are besides numerous detached buildings of irregular forms, that contrast happily with the dead and lofty walls by which others are surrounded.

One important improvement in this town particularly attracted our notice : all the streets are well paved with stone ; a regular drain runs along the centre of the principal ones, while a slighter hollow is seen in the smaller lanes and alleys, towards which the sides have a gradual inclination. This carries off the water, which in most other Persian cities stagnates in pools, or ploughs up and destroys the streets in its course. The inhabitants owe this essential addition to their comfort to Shah Abbas, who probably, at the same time that he made the great causeway through Mazunderān, ordered all the bazars and public streets to be paved, that they might be rendered passable in all weathers, which, it may be remarked, they could hardly ever be in so moist and rainy a climate, without such a precaution. The people are so sensible of the great utility of this measure, that they not only keep up the pavement of the public

streets, but have causewayed all the small lanes leading to their private houses; an attention to neatness which gives to Astrabad an air of comfort and cleanliness to which we had long been strangers.

The bazars or public markets are tolerably extensive, but poorly filled, as the shops contain little more than the articles required for the mere consumption of the place. Astrabad, indeed, though a port town of the Caspian Sea, can boast of but little trade. These bazars are covered from the weather, not as at Ispahan, Sheeraz, Tehrān, &c. by a series of arches and domes, but by a roofing like that of the houses, formed of wood, and covered with tiles or thatch.

There are no buildings, either public or private, deserving of particular notice at Astrabad. The palace of the Prince is a miserable establishment, consisting of several dewankhanchs, which is the Persian name for the public sitting-rooms of great men, with private apartments, and one or two courts, all in a state of decay. Some of them were undergoing repairs to fit them for the reception of the governor, Prince Budd-e-a-Zemaun Meerza, a boy of ten or eleven years of age, and grandson of the king, who was at this time expected. In the court we saw several pieces of cannon of various calibres, three or four of which were mounted on new carriages, ill and coarsely made; the rest, including a mortar, lay dismounted, and in a very neglected state.

The revenue derived from this little province does not exceed 12,000 tomauns, or about 7000*l.* sterling, no part of which, in all probability, ever reaches the royal treasury; but Astrabad is famous for its toffunchees, or matchlock-men, so called from toffung, a gun or matchlock, a considerable body of whom is generally in attendance upon, or within call of the king. This province is also the native country of the Kadgers, a Turkish tribe of which the king is the head; and is consequently considered by his majesty as that portion of his dominions on which he can best rely in times of danger or internal revolt.

During the time of our stay in Astrabad, I traversed the town in every direction, and made several excursions in its vicinity. In

the course of these rambles I was not less surprised at the extent, than gratified by the comparative cleanliness of the streets, and the freshness and beauty of the foliage that abounded in every part of this singular town. Among many fine old sycamores there rose some tall straggling cypress trees, that looked like dark spires above the roofs and thick verdure. The tops of the garden-walls and other inclosures, built of unbaked bricks or mud, and coped with reeds and clay, were gay with a thick covering of blue and yellow lillies, gilliflowers, and other brilliant plants; and the gardens themselves, full of fruit trees, particularly cherries and apples, were covered with a continued sheet of blossoms. I wandered through several of these gardens with great pleasure; that planted by the late governor, Mchedee Koolee Khan, though formal in its taste, and in the shapes of its trees, was particularly pleasing from its clear and abundant supply of water, its shade, and rich foliage.

When we passed the gates, and found ourselves fairly in the country, the eye was gratified by a more extensive though a less cultivated prospect. Climbing a hill which overlooked the town on the south-west, the whole seemed stretched at our feet, as in a map. To the east lay the Elburz range of mountains; their lower regions, and the deep valleys which intersected them, thickly clothed in dark green wood; their summits were chiefly hid in mist, or, when seen, presented bare rocks thickly spotted with snow: to the north and north-east extended the rich plains of Gourgaun, diversified with villages and forests, with verdure and cultivation, and terminating in the Toorkoman desert. On the north-west lay forest and cultivated land, bounded at a considerable distance by the Caspian Sea, which we now saw for the first time, and which was doubly interesting, as all that resembles the ocean must be to those who have long been excluded from its view. There are associations which connect themselves in an Englishman's thoughts with the "world of waters," which could not fail to be powerfully called forth by the sight of this great Asiatic lake.—Home, friends, and country, rushed almost painfully upon my recollection for a moment, but the presence of nearer objects dispelled the illusion, and I felt that we were still in Persia.

Looking from our height at the town beneath, we could not help remarking, that cultivation was much less abundant in its vicinity than at a distance from it ; and that the thicket and forest were permitted to encroach upon the abodes of man ; for the bramble and thorn, the wild pomegranate and plum, with other stubborn shrubs, formed an impenetrable cover up to the very walls. This, doubtless, must add greatly to, if it be not the chief cause of the unhealthiness which is attributed to Astrabad ; the inhabitants themselves admit the unwholesomeness of their city and climate, and their sallow looks confirm the fact. We observed many sick, and suffering under disorders that arise from the damp and noxious exhalations of the surrounding forests ; but all who can afford to retire from the town, leave it in the beginning of summer, and retreat to their Yeikāks, or summer habitations in the mountains ; which they only quit when the cold weather has restored the city and its vicinity to comparative salubrity.

CHAP. II.

DEPARTURE FROM ASTRABAD. — SHAH ABBAS'S CAUSEWAY. — REACH THE VILLAGE OF KOORDMUHULEH. — MARCH TO NOKUNDEH. — SCENERY AND VILLAGE DESCRIBED. — GARLIC USED IN GREAT QUANTITIES IN MAZUNDERAN. — MARCH TO ASHRUFF. — DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE ACCORDING TO HANWAY. — ITS PRESENT CONDITION DESCRIBED. — ANECDOTE OF THE KING. — OTHER WORKS OF SHAH ABBAS IN THIS VICINITY. — THE BAY OF ASTRABAD DESCRIBED.

I HAD agreed with the muleteer who came with us from Mushed, to continue on with us to Saree, the capital of Mazunderān, and we quitted Astrabad about seven in the morning of April 15th, 1822. Our course lay along a causewayed road, the remains of one of the finest and most useful public works of the great Shah Abbas. The soil of the provinces which border the Caspian Sea is of a nature for the most part so soft and deep, that when soaked by the heavy rains which fall for many months of the year in those regions, the roads become totally impassable. The monarch just mentioned, however, desirous to remedy this evil, and to provide a road that might be fit for travelling on at all times, constructed a causeway which extends from Kiskār, in the western part of Gheelān, to the foot of a pass east of Astrabad, leading to Bostām, and from the top of that pass along the valley of Mey Omeid and Jah Jerm, to a point near Chinnarān in the valley of Koordistan, about forty-five miles from Mushed.

It appears to have been formed by filling a deep trench with gravel and small stones, and laying over these a regular causeway of larger stones well and firmly built. Mr. Mac Donald Kinnear, upon the authority of Jonas Hanway, says that this causeway was in some places twenty yards broad ; there have no doubt been great changes since the days of Hanway, but I saw nothing calculated to support this statement. The breadth does not seem to have exceeded fif-

teen or sixteen feet, and in some places it was not more than ten ; but the solidity of its construction may be inferred from this, that although never repaired since the time it was first built, it can be traced, almost without interruption, though in very various condition, from one end to the other. In places where the country is thinly inhabited, or has been desolated by the Toorkomāns, as between Bostām and Chinnarān, it is, as I have been informed, in many parts still perfect ; for there it has been little travelled upon, as, the soil being of a harder nature, it was not so much made use of ; but below the hills, where the soil is soft, and the traffic great, it has been much injured, and in many places almost totally obliterated. In some places, indeed, the remains of this great work are fully as hurtful as beneficial to travellers ; for the stones having been loosened and disjoined, holes have been formed, into which animals are apt to slip their feet. During the march of this day, though traceable the whole way, it was for the most part very ruinous, and in some places we were forced to quit it and take to the clayey soil of the forest, however deep and painful for the cattle.

The road over which we travelled lay among thick jungle, sometimes consisting of lofty forest trees, but more frequently of thorns, brambles, and wild pomegranates. At times it would open on the cultivation of a village beautifully situated amid swelling lawns, and rich, well-inclosed fields, interspersed with high trees and copsewood. The mulberry was plentifully cultivated, and was surrounded with railings to keep off the cattle ; indeed so careful were the natives of this valuable plant, that the inclosures of the fields reminded me of the pleasure-grounds and plantations of an English country seat. The weather was cloudy but pleasant, and the hills, though generally enveloped in mist, frequently burst upon our view, disclosing glimpses of much grandeur and beauty.

We reached the valley of Koordmuhuleh about two o'clock, after a march of about twenty-three miles, our course being to the northward of west. The only quarters we could obtain were in the open verandah of a miserable house, the wretched tenants of which scolded and stormed most vehemently at being turned out by the

ketkhodah for our accommodation ; and it was only by dint of solid arguments in money, that I could silence their clamours and change their frowns into smiles ; — even then I had to pay most extravagantly for every thing that was required, either for the cattle or ourselves, and this although I was termed “ a guest.”

This village, which is large, contains, as I was informed, at least one thousand souls ; but little of it can be seen, for the houses are scattered in groups of two or three, among a great extent of jungle, so that in riding through it the traveller might think himself still in the forest, were it not that he sees smoke every here and there rising among the wood ; the greater part of this, however, consists of fruit-trees, or the larger forest-trees that have been preserved for shade or fuel. The houses belonging to each family are surrounded by a fence of logs and brushwood, as a defence against the jackalls, which swarm here, as well as to keep out other marauders. I observed several neat houses belonging to the Hakim (a brother of Mustapha Khan of Astrabad), and to others of the chief inhabitants, built somewhat in the style of Indian bungalows, or country-houses, with whitewashed walls and verandahs ; and the sight of several of these together reminded me strongly of the lines of a new cantonment in that country. There was in the village a Medressa, or College, and no less than two baths.

On the 16th of April, we marched about fourteen miles to Nokundeh, through scenery similar to that of yesterday. This is a small village distant about two miles to the right of the road, and like Koordmuhuleh, situated deep in the forest. The trees, which though seldom magnificent, were often both high and large, consisted of oak, elm, sycamore, varieties of the beech and ash, alder, with some walnut trees, and wild fruit trees of various kinds. The houses of this village were of the simplest construction. A frame of rudely squared wood, with uprights and beams also of wood, is raised upon blocks, to the height of two and a half or three feet from the ground ; the roof is formed of straw thatch, fastened upon wooden rafters. Half of the house remains perfectly open, and in this the family pass the greater part of the day ; the other half, being shut in

by filling the spaces between the uprights with clay, serves them for a sleeping place ; in it, too, as well as in a loft occasionally constructed above, they keep their few effects and stores of food.

The village women do not here conceal themselves so strictly as in most other parts of Persia ; they come out and employ themselves in their domestic duties without restraint, and we observed many of them very handsome ; but, like that of most Asiatics, their beauty appears soon to fade, after which they acquire a haggard and aged look at a very early period. Their costume differs little from that of the other provinces ; it consists of a shirt and a pair of trowsers, the former reaching only to the middle of the thigh ; a black silk handkerchief twisted round the head for a turban, with another, or a piece of white cloth, occasionally thrown over the head and shoulders as a veil ; and this forms nearly the whole of their dress. When they are going to any distance from home, they use the sheet or veil of cotton cloth, white, or checked with red and blue, which is common to all parts of the country, and which envelopes the whole person.

The strip of land which lies between the foot of the hills and the Caspian, from Astrabad to this place, varies from four to six miles broad ; but it contains many villages, all of which carry on trade with the 'Toorkomāns of the neighbouring desert, whom they furnish with fruits, cotton, silk, arms, and some manufactured goods ; and from whom they receive in return numuds or felts, horse clothing, carpets, packing bags called *Joûls*, salt and naphtha from Balcan. These again being bought up by passing merchants, find their way to Shahrood, Tehrān, Balfroosh, and other towns. Whether it were the close vicinity of these marauders that gave our host alarm, or that he was aware of his neighbours having imbibed from them irregular notions regarding property, I cannot say, but he came in the evening to inform us that he could not be answerable for the safety of our horses and baggage during the night, without some more ostensible sort of protection ; and as we could not reasonably blame the man for his caution, or expect him to insure our property placed thus exposed in an open village, we sent a message to Humza Khan, the

governor of the village, requesting such protection as he should deem needful. This produced a letter of polite reproach for not having put up with him on our arrival, and an offer of provision and refreshment to any extent we might require ; we excused ourselves, however, in consequence of the lateness of the hour, and accepted merely of a guard of toffunchees for the night.

Garlic is used in great quantities, and in all shapes, by persons of every age and description in this province. I had more than once been sensible of the smell of this root to an excessive degree, but this afternoon remarking it more particularly in my vicinity, and looking round for the cause of it, I observed an urchin of six or seven years of age close by me, munching a large stalk of the plant, leaves, roots and all ;—surprised as well as disgusted at this sight, I made enquiry, and soon discovered, that every individual in the house was thus indulging, or had lately eaten of it, in the same proportion. They told me that every one did the same ; that this practice was considered essential for correcting the moist air of the country, and that were it not for the quantity of garlic they devoured, they would all soon die. I found in the sequel that the practice was universal among the peasantry of Mazunderān.

On the 17th of April, we marched to Ashruff, about twenty-six miles, keeping nearly all the way either upon, or by the side of Shah Abbas's causeway ; which in some places was in tolerable repair, but oftener so bad as to force us to abandon it, and keep to the forest. There was a road also by the sea side, but it was in a desert, and, without a guide, somewhat dangerous ; so we preferred the better known, though less pleasant route along the causeway.

Like the march of yesterday, the chief part of this day's lay through dense jungle ; but larger openings intervened, and we enjoyed exquisite views, and peeps of villages, surrounded with more extensive cultivation, laid out in well-inclosed fields. The fences would in many instances have done honour to the most experienced English farmer ; they generally consisted of two small ditches, the earth from which being thrown up in the space between them, supported a paling of stakes covered with thorns, or of logs laid

along, and fastened between two rows of large stakes driven firmly into the ground. The fields were interspersed with fruit trees, many of which were also planted in the hedges.

About six miles from Nohundeh, we passed through a gap or gateway in a ruined wall formerly of considerable strength, which we learnt was the boundary between Astrabad and Mazunderān, and which once extended from the face of the hills to the sea.

Not far from Ashruff we were struck with the appearance of a small building, consisting of a round tower with a high conical roof, all of excellent masonry, and a tile-covered porch before it; it was said to be an Imaumzadeh. This term is given to the tombs and mausoleums erected over the bodies of those who were descended from any of the twelve Imaums. They are to be found in abundance all over Persia, and assume various shapes according to the fashion or materials used in the different provinces: this in question rather resembled an Indian pagoda. Its style of architecture and ornament, however, were Arabic; and had an air of antiquity that corresponded with some of the monuments of Arabic origin we had before seen in Khorasān. It was situated in a noble grove of old oak, elms, and sycamores: and a burying-ground, of which the tombstones showed the antiquity, had gradually gathered around it: it was a place well suited for meditation and retirement.

The chinār or sycamore grows luxuriantly in those forests, and is one of their greatest ornaments; the oak is likewise a fine tree, but too frequently is drawn into height, and becomes deficient in its branch; the beech is feathered with boughs as in England, often to the very ground. This day, for the first time, we remarked the box-tree among the underwood.

We were provided with a lodging at Ashruff, by Meerza Mehdce, the Hakim, in a part of the old palace, which is kept in a habitable state, to accommodate his majesty during the frequent visits he makes to this province; and as Ashruff is a place of some celebrity, and was once of much magnificence, I devoted some time to its examination.

This royal residence is described by Hanway, as it appeared at a time when it still retained much of its original splendour. I quote the whole passage, as it may be interesting to compare its present with its former state.

“ In this place is a celebrated palace built by Shah Abbas, far exceeding any on the whole coast of the Caspian Sea. Over the gate which forms the entrance, are the arms of Persia ; being a lion with the sun rising behind it, alluding to the strength and glory of the Persian monarchy. Within this gate is a long avenue, on each side of which are thirty apartments, intended for a royal guard ; the next gate in front opens into a garden, in the middle of which is a channel made with stone, about three feet wide, and one deep ; in this channel runs a stream of water, which has four falls about an ell high, thirty yards distant from each other, each having a small basin and fountain ; these falls must have a fine effect ; for, on the side near the stream, holes are cut to fix candles at equal distances, to the number of about a thousand : at the head of these is a large stone basin about six feet deep. In the building there is near this basin a sumptuous aiwan, painted with gold flowers on a blue ground, very well executed ; here are also several portraits which seem to have been done by a Hollander, but no masterly hand. On the sides of the aiwan are several small apartments, and behind this building are three other falls of water, which pour down from the sides of a steep mountain covered with wood.

“ The gardens consist chiefly in walks, bordered with very large pines, orange, and other fruit trees disposed in beds, with streams of water running between them. From thence we were carried into another garden, much in the same taste, in which stood the Harem ; there was nobody in it, yet, being the women's apartment, it was considered as sacred, and we were not permitted to go into it. Before it is a large basin of water, and a square with marble benches at each corner : a sycamore of prodigious size in the centre shaded the whole with its extended branches ; here were also cascades, in the same manner as related in the other garden. From them we were conducted to a banqueting house ; which was dedi-

“ cated to a grandson of Allee ; out of respect to this place, we
 “ were required to leave our swords at the door. The solemnity
 “ with which we were conducted, struck me with a kind of religious
 “ awe: but this was soon changed into contempt; for I was
 “ surprised to find the room adorned with paintings such as could
 “ please only a voluptuous Mahomedan. Here were also portraits of
 “ Shah Abbas, the first and second, and of some other persons, all
 “ by an European hand, but meanly performed. It had no furni-
 “ ture but rich carpets, which were then piled into great heaps.

“ We were now shown a fourth house and garden, in which was
 “ the spring that gave water to the greatest part of the whole. In
 “ this was a stately dome, whose top was indifferently well painted,
 “ and the walls covered with Dutch tiles as high as the gallery. At
 “ some distance from this, on a small eminence, is a small building,
 “ which seemed to be intended for an observatory. The whole com-
 “ mands the view of a very fine country, the Caspian Sea being
 “ about five miles distant. The vicinity of the mountain at the back
 “ of this palace, the numerous cascades, and the music of the birds,
 “ gave me many pleasing ideas; but the unhappy situation of the
 “ people still returned to my thoughts, and blunted the edge of that
 “ pleasure which I might otherwise have enjoyed.”

The ruins and garden, as they now appear, cover a great extent of ground, and, as far as I could judge, consisted originally of six different establishments, each having its separate garden. Of these, five appeared to have been inclosed within one large fortified wall; these are, the Baugh Shahee; that of Saheb Zemaun, or the 12th Imaun; that of the Harem; the Khelwut, or private garden; and the Baugh-e-tuppeh, or “ garden of the mount,” in which we were lodged. Below these, and without the circuit of the wall, but appended as it were to the inclosure, is situated the Baugh, and Imarut-e-Chushmah; that is, the garden and palace of the fountain. There is, besides, the pleasure-house of Sooffeeabad, built upon a hill above the other gardens, commanding a magnificent view of the plains of Mazunderān, and of the Caspian Sea.

The Baugh-e-Shah, or king's garden, is the same that Hanway describes as being so splendidly furnished with canals, cascades, and aiwan; but its condition is now miserably changed. The outer gate, of which he speaks, is demolished; and of the long avenue of apartments for the royal guards, nothing now remains but heaps of rubbish, denoting where they stood. The inner gate exists; but it has either been rebuilt, or never was very splendid, for there are no marks of splendour about it now. On entering, the canal which Hanway describes, with its four cascades over scaled stones, is still to be seen; but many of the large stones which edged its sides have been displaced or broken. The holes used to hold the candles in illuminations are still there; but the water no longer fills the channel, which is dry and choked with rubbish. The large stone cistern at the top, which is, I think, fully twenty yards square, is still in good order, although the water with which it is filled is foul, and choked with weeds; but the splendid Chehel Sittoon*, or aiwan, which formed the termination to the fine vista of the canal and garden, no longer exists; it was burnt by accident during the reign of Nadr Shah, along with the huge sycamore, which caught the flames; and not a vestige of either now remains. Nadr desired that something should be built in its place, and his orders were executed in the meanest possible way, by erecting a wretched ugly wooden house, or rather shed, on the very site once occupied by the elegant structure of Shah Abbas, where it now stands, like a ragged beggar who has got by accident into the drawing-room of a nobleman.

The garden has altogether fallen from its former splendour; only a few of the noble old pines and cypresses, contemporaries of the great founder, yet remain, and most of them are in decay; but there are many cypress and orange trees of later date, which form a sad contrast with those of the old time. They are all posterior to those which Hanway saw.

The garden and palace just described, face the north; on the left hand, or west, stand the ruins of the Harem, which

* Chehel Sittoon, literally "forty pillars," is a term frequently applied to palaces which have by no means so many columns.

are very extensive, but in such complete decay, that in many parts it is difficult to trace the plan of the building. In the gardens attached to them stands an edifice once elegantly domed, with chambers that were tastefully adorned both above and below ; this was a pleasure-house, appropriated to the ladies, and into which, although it was unoccupied at the time, Hanway was not permitted to enter ; but the abode of love and beauty is now the haunt of the meanest animals ; cows and mules were stabled here, and men and boys more brutal still, were whooping and hallooing through the once respected apartments. The garden is still marked by the orange-trees, which are kept up and cherished, merely because their fruit is valuable, not for ornament. In the interior of all the buildings could be traced the remains of splendid paintings, in azure, green, and gold ; but the tiles and stones that covered great part of the walls, had been broken or removed to other places ; and the rest was defaced by smoke, damp, and rain.

To the south of these ruins, between them and the mountain, are to be seen the remains of that building, said by Hanway to have been dedicated to a grandson of Allee, but in reality, as I was informed, to the 12th Imaum, under the title of Saheb Zemaun, but the roof of its splendid dome had fallen in, and the voluptuous pictures which offended the good taste of our countryman, with portraits and all, have vanished from its walls ; only here and there a few of the gold and azure flowers which more chastely adorned them, could be traced through the black veil of smoke which obscured them, arising from the fires of shepherds, beggars, dervishes, and every kind of vagabond, who constantly haunt the ruins. The building originally consisted of one lofty central apartment, with one of lesser dimensions at either end ; besides which, several still smaller rooms occupied the corners ; all of them are said to have been splendidly fitted up. The inclosure in which it is situated, was adorned with gardens, canals, and reservoirs, now all destroyed.

Between this place and the Harem, may be seen the remains of a gateway, above which is a small chamber, where Shah Abbas was accustomed to sit, and receive the visits of ambassadors, particularly

Europeans, in private. Just in front of it, are four fine sycamore-trees, beside a cistern of water, surrounded by a pavement of flag stones ; and the remains may yet be traced of stone blocks for supporting seats, upon which carpets were placed for the accommodation of these guests under the shade ; while the king held converse with them from above, and regaled them with fruits and sherbets, or possibly more generous draughts.

To the west of this spot was situated the Khelwut, or private palace and garden, which is still more completely dismantled. In front of the ruins, I observed a man busily employed in placing a number of square flag-stones in order, as if for tombstones. Upon inquiry, I discovered that these had formed the pavement of one of Shah Abbas's dewankhanehs ; but some one had taken a fancy to them, and having raised them up from where they had often given footing to a monarch, was very coolly transporting them to make a floor for his own mean cabin. A large but confused mass of ruins, thickly covered with foliage, occupies the ground about the Harem to the west ; and here arose its lofty wall, shrouding its fair inmates even from the neighbouring height of Sooffecabad. On that and all the surrounding hills, sentinel eunuchs were posted to prevent the possibility of any eye, however daring, profaning with its glance, even from that distance, the forms or the charms dedicated to their sovereign alone.

It is impossible, I think, to traverse these ruins without experiencing very powerfully the emotions which scenes of vanished pomp and pleasure ever awaken ; indeed, I do not remember to have experienced them often in a stronger degree. The old man who accompanied us was minute and eloquent in his narrations, the ruins themselves were extensive and majestic, and at every turn there were points of reminiscence, hints as it were of past realities, which, like the sharp and masterly touches of a fine picture, seemed to bring the past more freshly before us. I could fancy that I saw the actual traces of the gallant and magnificent monarch, who, whatever might be his faults to his own subjects, was always the friend and protector of Europeans, always liberal in his sentiments, and

enlightened in his policy; the patron of science, the encourager of all improvement, the Lewis 14th of Persia. I was carried back in imagination to those times when the great Shah Abbas had given and partaken of many joyous feasts in this very palace; many scenes of deep interest, many too doubtless of dark atrocity, had passed within these walls. Many a lovely form had here sighed for liberty, or for the lover from whose arms she had been torn to suffer the cold embraces of a despot, perhaps but to be immured in his harem. But all were gone—monarch and captive, the palace and the prison, alike crumbled to the dust, and the most sacred spot contaminated by the feet of infidel strangers.

To the east of this mass of ruins is situated the Baugh-e-tuppch, or garden of the mount; this has been placed on a rising ground levelled for the purpose, and forming a projection of the walled space, which has a handsome bastion at each corner. A range of buildings runs between this and the Baugh-e-shah, which are kept in some degree of repair for the royal accommodation, when his majesty visits Ashruff; and they also serve for lodgings to any guests of sufficient consideration who come to the place.

A flight of steps at the south-eastern corner of this garden, conducts to the Baugh-e-Chushmah, which lies on a lower level. This is laid out in the same taste as the rest. A canal of water, faced with stone, having several small cascades in its course, all now chiefly in ruins, runs through the centre from a building at the further end; this canal is bordered with fine old cypress and orange trees; and there are a great many of the latter, as well as of pomegranate trees, all through the garden. The building is called Imarut-e-Chushmah, or fountain palace, and has been built over a very copious fountain, which rises from the ground within a cistern about eighteen feet square, from whence it flows in a full stream, supplying the canal and garden with water. The form of the structure is square, rising in the centre to a fine dome, a great portion of which had fallen about a month before into the cistern below, and nearly choked it up. The water once flowed out by courses made for the purpose at each face; and the place, ornamented as it was with marble, and

superb painting in azure and gold, with galleries for music, and every species of luxury, must have been a delightful retreat in the heats of summer, for the water is always cool and refreshing, and flowed continually with a soft rippling sound ; but every thing is now fast going to decay, and in a few years more will probably have crumbled to pieces. The water nevertheless still flows plentifully out by two of the channels, and irrigates not only the garden, but a considerable extent of cultivation besides. Whether this fountain is natural or artificial, I could not distinctly ascertain ; probably it may, in a great measure, be collected into one point from various sources in the neighbouring hills ; and it has been said that the assistance of an European engineer was obtained for the purpose.

We did not omit to visit Sooffeeabad. This is probably the place which Hanway supposes to have been intended for an observatory ; it is built upon a promontory, which terminates a spur from the Elburz mountains, and overlooks the town and country to a great distance. A platform constructed for the purpose, and partly flagged with stones, serves as a foundation for the building, which is square, having two stories, and a tiled pavilion roof. This, with its arched and pointed windows, the arcaded wall which supports the platform, and the cypresses and orange trees with which it is surrounded, gives it the appearance of an Italian villa. It has the usual large central hall, with corner apartments, and many others of smaller dimensions distributed throughout the thick walls. Above, instead of the centre room, there are four comfortable apartments looking to the different faces. The material of this building, for six or eight feet from the ground, is stone and lime, above which, like all the other palaces, it is constructed of capital bricks and mortar ; but it seems as if this in particular had lately undergone repairs, of which the workmanship was far inferior to that of the original fabric ; for in many places it is falling into decay, although it is the only one of this cluster of palaces to which any degree of attention is paid.

A noble view on every side is enjoyed from this place ; and a more fascinating landscape than these plains afford in a fine day,

varied as they are with forest and cultivation, chequered with all the magic of light and shade, and fading into distance, or bounded by the Caspian, cannot well be conceived. The place well deserves a monarch's favour and protection; and it is not one of the least of the many reproaches which attach to this king's reign, that he refuses to authorize the smallest expence towards keeping in substantial repair any part of this once noble establishment.

A Seyed (as all the descendants of the prophets are called), who acts as a sort of architect here, took occasion, during one of the king's visits to Mazunderān about three years before, to represent to his majesty in person the state of these buildings, entreating him at least to put in order the Imarut-c-Chushmah; but his majesty replied, "It will cost too much money; the king cannot afford it." "Then will the King of Kings consent to order repairs to Sooffecabad?" The same answer was returned by the monarch. "Then," insisted the Seyed, "if the father of the world will not authorize this expenture from the royal treasury, at least let it please him to sanction it from the treasures of the founder Shah Abbas?" "Hah!" cried the king, "and where are these to be found?" "Why," returned the Seyed, "your slave would humbly represent to your majesty, that the water of this fountain, if put to proper account, would produce three thousand khurwars of rice, and if your majesty would but order the advance of two or three thousand tomauns, the revenue thus derived from it would repay the cost in less than ten years." "Say no more, say no more," cried the economical monarch, "the king can make no outlay; the profit is too small, and too distant; the king can do nothing of the kind."

The place is not only thus neglected, but systematically dilapidated; every one who chooses, carries off the tiles and other materials which he fancies, for his own use: the fine flag-stones, many of them six feet square, which were brought at enormous expence from Bāko in Sheerwan, as well as the beautiful marble slabs which formed the basements, were all fastened together by iron clamps cemented with lead; these have been broken in pieces for the sake of the metal; and the fragments, with a quantity of the brick and tiles, have been car-

ried away by the Moollahs of the neighbouring town, for the purpose, as they say, of building a miserable college.

The town of Ashruff has hardly suffered less than the royal establishment to which it probably owed its existence. Tradition says, that it once boasted of 300 baths within its walls, with other public buildings, and a population in proportion ; and though this is most probably a great exaggeration, there can be no doubt, supported as it was by the frequent presence of a brilliant court, Ashruff was once large and populous. It now contains only about 500 houses, thinly scattered through an extensive jungle ; and the prince receives no more from the town and its dependent villages, than the service of 300 toffungchees or matchlock men.

There are several other works of Shah Abbas in the vicinity of Ashruff ; among others, I heard of a bund or dam, at some distance within the hills, which had been constructed to retain the waters of a stream, by which means a large tract of rice grounds was supplied with the water required for their cultivation : this dam retains the name of its founder, and is still, I believe, in useful operation. The same monarch also erected caravanseraies and store-houses, for a bunder or shipping port, on the banks of the Caspian, at a place called Kara-tuppeh, about seven miles north-east from Ashruff ; and ships, it is said, used to [come there regularly to receive and deliver cargoes. These buildings are now in ruins ; and, I believe, the place is abandoned as a port. It is to be remarked, that a neck of land, varying in breadth from four to twelve miles, runs from a point near Astrabad for about seventy miles eastward, dividing a strip of water from eight to forty miles broad, from the main body of the Caspian. There is an opening in this spit of land, by which vessels of small burthen can enter this lake or back-water, but I do not know exactly where it is situated ; fish is caught here in plenty, I believe chiefly of that species of mullet mentioned by Forster, in his overland journey, said to be cured entirely by smoke ; and the traffic with the Toorkomans is carried on, in great measure, upon this interior sea.

CHAP. III.

LEAVE ASHRUFF.—STRANGE MELANCHOLY AND ILLNESS OF MEERZA-ABDOOL-REZAK.
 —CAUSES EXPLAINED.—BIGOTRY OF THE ASTRABADEES—THEIR IGNORANT SUPERSTITION EXEMPLIFIED.—NICA.—CONDITION OF THE SOLDIERS FURNISHED BY THE DIFFERENT DISTRICTS.—CONVERSATION WITH AN OLD MOOLLAH.—BRIDGE OF NICA.—BRIDGE OVER THE THEDGEN.—REACH SAREE.—LODGED WITH RAMZAUN BEG—HIS CHARACTER AND HOUSE DESCRIBED.—VISIT TO PRINCE MAHOMED KOOLEE MEERZA.

ALTHOUGH Ashruff and its vicinity afforded many objects of interest, to which I would fain have given a little more time and attention, I had yet so many reasons to expedite my journey, and at least to reach Saree, where I might have reasonable hope of receiving news from Tehran, that I resolved to proceed on my way, on the morning of the 20th; particularly as I had succeeded in making all the astronomical observations I could hope for at the time, necessary to fix the position of the place. I found too that my companion Meerza-Abdool-Rezāk had, as he believed, causes of uneasiness and alarm, which induced him also to wish for our arrival at a point, where we both hoped to be more at our ease.

The Meerza, ever since we quitted Boojnoord in Koordistan, had evinced symptoms of a mind greatly distressed, if not quite deranged; and at Astrabad, this had risen to such a pitch, as to affect his bodily health very materially: he grew alarmingly thin and weak, would sit for hours in a state of abstraction, without uttering a word; but when urged to say what ailed him, would deny that any thing was the matter. I thought, indeed, that the cause was to be looked for in his strong attachment to sooffeeism, a singular mental delusion very common in the East, and the irregular workings of his own

brain; that his mental faculties were unequal to the subjects of his meditations, which turned upon the wildest metaphysical questions. I suspected that this was the case, from the nature of certain conversations he had held with me, particularly regarding the nature of the soul, and its probable destination; and he constantly expressed the greatest anxiety to become acquainted with the mystery of Free Masonry, which he believed to be but an exalted degree of sooffeeism; and which, if he could acquire it, would, in a great measure, solve his doubts. However these things might be, his disease increased continually until we got to Ashruff; and here he came to the resolution of disburthening himself of his mysterious secret, and confiding to me the cause of his unhappiness.

The manner in which he effected this was strictly oriental and characteristic: he used many a figure, and related many a story illustrative of his own situation and meaning; but what might be amusing to a listener, would probably be tedious to the reader; and the fact turned out to be simply this. Taking up the matter from the origin of our acquaintance, the Meerza observed, that hearing from his European friends at Tehran of my intention to visit Bockhara and Samarcand, places which he had long wished to see, fond too of the society of Europeans, and pleased (as he chose to say) with what he had seen of me at Tehran, he consented to accompany me on my travels; without considering what his own friends and the world in general would say to him, a man of letters, a Seyed, and of good connections, for consenting to serve me, and associating with an unbelieving Frank. At Mushed, he had first experienced the unpleasant effects of the situation in which he had placed himself; which, as he assured me, had more than once nearly cost both our lives. He could not, however, bear to leave me a stranger in the midst of people who would fain have had my blood; and he assured me, he would have readily gone with me to Bockhara, had circumstances permitted us to proceed thither; but having once quitted Mushed, and being on our return to a country where he conceived I could make my own way, he left it to me to decide on what he should do. He said, that at Astrabad he was in terror, lest they should know

that I was an European, or see him eat with me ; for that they surely would have put us both to death, as Kaffers and unbelievers.

To all this I could only reply, that I was sure he exaggerated matters, and saw them in a false light ; I reminded him of the many good Mussulmans who served English gentlemen, without suffering at all in the estimation of their countrymen. I treated him in his own way, and told him the story of the countryman and the cock*, to show how far a diseased imagination may carry a man ; assuring him of my belief, that he laboured under a delusion of the same nature. Sometimes he seemed convinced, and told me he was ashamed of his follies ; but it was evident, that the alarm and pain he had suffered still hung heavy on his mind ; he allowed, as he said, that “ the cock was still on his shoulder ;” and that being the case, I saw that it was best for both that we should part ; we agreed that this parting should take place at Saree, and were both desirous to reach that place.

I found indeed that the Meerza had by no means exaggerated the fanatical bigotry of the Astrabadees ; nor was that disposition less prevalent in this place and its vicinity. I found it was quite expedient to accommodate myself to this furious zeal, which raged with an exclusive severity hardly to be equalled at Mushed itself, and but little to be seen in other parts of Persia. Luckily, it was not always accompanied by a corresponding quickness of observation, and I could not help internally smiling at the triumphant pride, with which a peasant at Nokundeh, supposing me to be a Mahometan pilgrim upon my return from Mushed, related to me his *seven* visits to the shrine of that place ; and declaimed loudly against infidelity of all sorts, and particularly against those who were enemies of Allee and his descendants.

Their exceeding zeal for this illustrious family prompts them to exertions in commemoration of its fate, which are only to be equalled by the grossness of their superstition. Not content with celebrating

* The story of Dr. Pitcairn, who worked upon the imagination of a countryman so ingeniously, as to make the poor man really believe he had *a fine cock upon his shoulder*, is sufficiently well known.

the death of Hussun and Hoossain during the festival called the Mohurrun, which lasts for a month in the year, after the manner of other good sheeahs, they enact the tragedy which represents the death of these brothers, and cry and groan for them every Friday, and generally also some other day of every week ; some employ three days in this worthy manner, and among other ceremonies observed on the occasion, a dish of pillaw is brought and presented to the person who enacts the part of the prophet ; and he is told, that God finding it to be excellent, had sent this dish to regale his favorite from his own table. This singular piece of mummery, of the truth of which I was assured by several persons, and among them, by Meerza-Abdool-Rezak, is the more extraordinary, and evinces an ignorance and superstition the more gross, because attributing human wants to the Almighty, is in opposition to the usual Mahometan tenets. Another being told of the admirable rice and milk, and apples, which are promised to the just in paradise, expressed himself as exceedingly surprised that pillaw was not enumerated among the good things to be enjoyed there. " Oh," said a third, " at that time God had not learned to make pillaw ; no doubt it will be forthcoming there " now !"

We quitted Ashruff at half-past six, and marched to a village close to Pool-e-sir-e Nica, about seventecn miles ; our course being a little to the southward of west. The causeway was again our road, and was throughout in much better order than heretofore. It less resembled a causeway, however, than a road well metaled with gravel and small stone, and really was not a bad specimen of Macadamization ; the larger ones, if there were any, had been worn away, leaving only the smaller materials behind ; but in some parts, they might be seen beneath, where the coating of metal had been broken, and could generally be traced at the sides, binding all together like curbstones. In some places, the lower stratum had been composed of bricks, which here and there made their appearance, from the detrition of the superincumbent materials.

As we approached Nica, the mountains and forests retreated to the left, leaving the country comparatively open, varied on the one

hand by undulating ground, numerous villages, well inclosed fields, and scattered wood; and on the other stretching away in rich cultivated plains, nearly to the sea. Nica is the name of a ballook or division, consisting of many villages, which are peopled by a part of the Gereilee tribe, of Turkish extraction, who inhabited the districts of Kalpoosh, and part of Gorgaun, which lie to the eastward of Astrabad, but who were removed from them in some of the political arrangements of Aga Mahomed Khan, I believe in consequence of their evincing too much of a rebellious spirit. On our way through the plains of Gorgaun, we saw the ruins of some of their settlements, particularly one large square inclosure, which had been the wall of a populous and well fortified village. This division of the tribe now furnishes to the crown one thousand horsemen, who receive only seven tomauns, or about 4*l.* sterling, a-year each, payment of which is made very irregularly; for this they must find themselves in a horse, a sword, and spear; the horse alone costs twenty tomauns at least, independent of his maintenance; but their governors give themselves small concern, as to the means by which such an outfit is to be provided; and consequently the force is little more than nominal. It was with one of these people that I lodged, and he complained to me bitterly of his condition, and especially of the extreme irregularity with which his wretched pay was furnished: he had not at this time received a farthing of what was due for the previous autumn months; and was in debt for his horse and arms. These poor fellows are therefore all forced to have recourse to agriculture, for the support of themselves and families; and, I believe, appear but rarely in the field.

I thought I could perceive in the appearance of these people, and particularly in the women, a peculiarity of countenance strongly indicative of Tartar origin. Their complexions were swarthy, their eyes small, and their beards thin, while their hair was of a dark black. They gave me a very hospitable reception, and a decent lodging. An old Moollah, or priest, a native of Damghan, but residing in the village, insisted on entering into conversation with me upon religious subjects: he was not aware who or what I was, but being very desirous

to find out, tried me on every tack, with great pertinacity, in order to discover the degree of regard I might be entitled to, and tempting me to confidence, by a very unreserved account of himself and his sentiments. I amused myself for some time, in baffling these attempts by ambiguous answers, and a mysterious deportment: but finding him pressing me too closely, I told him that such matters were not to be discussed in half an hour's conversation over a pipe, and that it was irreverent in a high degree, to treat sacred subjects in so light a manner: I therefore declined saying any thing more about the matter. He acknowledged that I was in the right, and thus we parted good friends: but in the course of the evening, he came again to my lodging, and my servants, I suppose, having incautiously dropt some hint of who I was, it was curious to observe his altered carriage. Being a little ashamed of his former indiscreet openness, he was now shy, and looked rather foolish, but continued very respectful and friendly. On the whole, I had every reason to be pleased with my quarters at Nica.

A fine full stream runs through the middle of this ballook or district, over which Mahomed Hoossain Khan Kadjer built a handsome bridge of one arch, from whence the place derives its name. This nobleman was mentioned as the father of the reigning monarch; but I believe in reality he was his grandfather. His son Hoossain Koolee Khan was the father of the present king Futeh Allee' Shah. There are many public works of a similar nature attributed to Mahomed Hoossain Khan Kadjer; who, in the time of Kurreem Khan, held a very unlimited sway over Mazunderān, the country of his tribe. I record this act of a Kadjer with the more pleasure, because the good works of that dynasty are very rare. The present generation, however, have no feeling of this sort, and seem determined that they shall not remain to put them to shame; for this bridge, from the want of a few needful repairs to its parapets and pavement, is fast going to decay, and in a few years will probably become impassable.

On the 21st of April, we marched to Saree, about eighteen miles along the causeway: which, both through the cultivated grounds

and forest, resembles a well-metalled English road ; being raised in the middle, and having hollows or drains along the sides. The cultivation of Nica, with its fine enclosure, continued for three or four miles, extending to a great distance on either hand ; and the blue haze and dews of morning added beauty to a scene, the varied loveliness of which could not be surpassed. We then entered into deep forests for seven or eight miles, when the country opened again into a wide extent of rice fields. Within a mile of Saree we crossed the river Thidjen or Tedjen upon a solid and handsome bridge of seventeen arches, built also by Mahomed Hoossain Khan Kadjer. This very useful structure is rather narrow, being only twenty-four feet wide over all, a fault common to most Persian bridges ; like that of Nica, too, it is fast going to ruin. The stream is broad and strong, and in floods must be very formidable ; it has quitted the bed in which it ran when the bridge was first constructed, and now passes close to the eastern bank, which it is rapidly carrying away. The consequence has been, that the two eastern arches have given way and fallen into the stream ; which, by this obstruction, has become more impetuous, so that a third arch has been undermined, and must soon, in like manner, be destroyed. No measures had been taken to prevent further damage ; but a few planks have been thrown over the gaps, in a way so insufficient, that no loaded animal can cross without the greatest hazard.

As I intended to pay my respects to Mahomed Koolee Meerza, the governor of Mazunderān, one of the king's sons, and being aware that we could not enter Saree without his immediate knowledge, I thought it best to dispatch a messenger to Meerza Sauduk, the minister, acquainting him with my arrival, and requesting him to appoint me a lodging for the time I meant to remain at Saree. Accordingly, after waiting some time as patiently as might be at one of the gates, we were marshalled to the house of Ramzaun Beg, Nazir or superintendant of the prince's private household. This gentleman we learned had a great fancy for constructing neat houses, and took much delight in keeping them in high order. I accordingly found the room prepared for me to correspond with this account of its

owner, for it was one of the neatest and most comfortable I had ever seen in Persia. It had, however, one serious inconvenience: it was his own private sitting room, and being raised one full story from the ground, the regular entry to it was through the apartments to his family. I could not of course make use of this passage, and the only mode of entrance that could be devised for me, was by a ladder of no very solid construction, placed at the window for the purpose. This notable contrivance, however, was not only awkward both for myself and for visitors, but a most uncomfortable check upon my astronomical observations, as I could not go up or down at any time without imminent hazard to my instruments. But my honest friend, the Nazir, meant well; and it would have been most ungracious to complain; so I made my arrangements forthwith for continuing here some days.

This house, and our treatment in it, exhibited a good practical illustration of a Persian's notions of comfort, of Persian hospitality, and, I might add, of the superficial character of every thing we saw in Persia. The house, in so far as it met the eye, was good, comfortable, and clean, and the rooms of reception were neat, and even elegant. The walls were nicely plastered, and adorned with devices in stucco; the windows were carved, and coloured in forms like those exhibited in the kaleidoscope. Numerous niches in the walls were fitted up with velvet and gold-worked coverings. A handsome fire-place occupied one side, beautiful numuds* and rich carpets were spread above Indian mats on the floor. But the moment these rooms were passed, the bare bricks and unplastered walls stared you in the face; the passages and staircases were so narrow that two persons could hardly pass each other, and every thing looked slovenly and unfinished. The approach from without was by a dirty lane, so narrow, that a man on horseback could not reach the door; on either side of which were heaps of broken bricks and earth, dirt, and pools of green or slimy water. Yet, before the windows, were little gardens neatly laid out in walks, shrubs, and beds of flowers;

* Numuds are thick carpets of felt, which are sometimes highly ornamented with flowers, and other devices, in various colours.

and beyond the town wall might be seen a fine prospect of the plains and mountains. The lodging assigned to the principal guest was comfortable enough ; but the servants of that guest had hardly a place to lay their heads on, or to protect his baggage from the weather. We dined on good pillaw, but our servants had often not even dry bread to put in their mouths, unless their master gave them money to pay for it ; and as to his horses, they had neither shelter nor food, not even a place where they might stand upon dry ground.

The Nazir received us cordially enough, doing the honours of his house with readiness, and even with kindness, but without the least appearance of servility ; he even retained something in his expression, which said, " I am master here ;" as if he despised the usual but hollow forms of Persian civility, which tell you that all they have is yours ; yet grudge or deny you almost every thing you wish for.

Ramzaun Beg might be between fifty and sixty, of a meagre person, and thin sharp features, with a large nose overhanging his mouth, beneath which hung down a long black beard. His temper was a little warm, and sometimes rather peevish, and he had something satirical in his expression ; but in spite of this he was kind and good, and I think had as little of selfishness in his character as any Persian I ever knew. He sat with us till dinner-time, and partook of that meal with us ; after which, we were joined by other guests, his friends, who kept us up till a late hour. The prince's chief peishkhidmut, or body servant, also came this afternoon, ostensibly with his master's welcome in his mouth, but in reality to examine the appearance of the stranger, and learn what chance there might be for receiving presents ; of this I received a private hint, communicated to the Meerza by some of his Dervish friends.

During the 22d of April it rained till late in the day ; and I took advantage of it to write letters to my friends at Tehran ; dispatching them by a special messenger, who engaged to carry them, and return with the answers within ten days, for the sum of twenty-four reals, about thirty-three shillings. It was intimated to me this

day, that the prince would receive me next day ; and my host told me plainly that his royal highness looked for a very handsome present ; or, to use the old gentleman's own words, " that he had made a sack " both deep and wide, which he expected I should fill ;" this was unwelcome news for one whom the presents required for the Koordish chiefs, and the sacrifices which were made to obtain money at Mushed, had stript of almost every thing that could be available for such a purpose.

April 23. — The morning was fine, but I could not take advantage of it ; as it was necessary to wait at home until the prince should send intimation that he was ready to receive me. The great men of Persia at all times delight in impressing upon their inferiors a sense of their own importance ; and upon this principle, they detain those who come to wait upon them as long as possible, to give them a due sense of that condescension which at last admits them to the presence. I waited till past noon for the expected message ; and when all expectation of it was nearly over, the order came, and I proceeded to the palace. This royal residence consists of a collection of poor looking buildings, roofed with common tiles ; to which we were admitted through a very mean gateway. Nothing at all imposing met the eye upon entrance, either in the buildings, or in the attendance ; there were a good many people scattered about, or sitting in the various apartments, but no affectation of parade whatever. The prince was seated in a sort of eywan, an apartment open on both sides to a garden of fruit trees. A person, who, I believe, was the airuzbeggee, or lord in waiting, took me forward and presented me, making me perform the customary three obeisances, exacted by all the royal family. I was directed to leave my slippers at the middle of the space before the door ; but seeing others wearing them at the door itself, I also walked up with them upon my feet. It was shut, but soon opened, and permitted us to see the prince seated on a musnud, or thin cushion, placed at the upper end of a long numud, or carpet of felt, which ran along the window. He did not, as usual, call out to bring me up ; therefore, when the door opened, I walked in, bowed, and then walking

up to the lower end of the numud, seated myself near the window opposite to him. I was induced to act thus rather unceremoniously, to avoid the awkwardness of being forced to remain standing for an indefinite period, while the menials, and persons in attendance, perhaps even the great man himself, might be enjoying the confusion thus occasioned, and forgetting it may be the stipulated condition of a seat. I had observed somewhat of a disposition to act thus in the conduct of the master of the ceremonies, and resolved to put a stop to it by the measures I should take in the presence ; and they had the best effect possible. The prince welcomed me with much affability, talked with me on various subjects for twenty minutes, and then giving me leave to depart, signified that I had his permission to amuse myself, by going through any part of his government, and seeing every thing that was to be seen ; adding, that my mehmandar, Ramzaun Beg, was a perfect guide. He asked for the drawings I had made, and expressed a wish to see my astrolabe and other instruments ; but added, that there was no hurry, as I was not immediately to depart, and that I should come and show them another time.

Mahomed Koolee Meerza is the third son of the king, and from his looks might be taken for thirty-five and forty years of age ; he bears many of the characteristic features which so distinctly mark the royal family ; but he is not nearly so handsome as most of the king's other sons ; he is thin and marked by the small pox, and his beard, though far from poor, is yet much inferior to those which dignify the countenance of his father or his brothers. He was dressed in a kabba, or vest of rich gold brocade, and had upon his shoulders and arms the covering or mail of pearls and gems, which we observe in the pictures of the kings of Persia. A richly-jewelled dagger was thrust into his shawl girdle ; and the buttons of his kabba were of emeralds. On his head was placed merely a plain black lamb-skin cap. He was the first of the Persian princes whom I had seen thus adorned, for it is not common for them to wear so many jewels, except upon particular days ; upon the musnud before him, there lay two or three watches, and other toys, which seemed to have been just taken from a box near him, and were perhaps meant to convey

an intimation of the gifts he expected ; indeed he gave me a hint himself, by asking what strange or valuable things I had brought along with me from Europe.

During this interview, his son, Iskunder Meerza, a fine blooming boy of eleven or twelve years, and still more superbly dressed than his father, came into the court below ; and saluting his parent humbly, took his place like the rest of the attendants, standing in a respectful attitude, and remained thus in waiting during the whole audience. This might, perhaps, have been got up in order to show the stranger how strict a respect and obedience was exacted, not only from servants, but even from his own family. I understood that this boy had an establishment exclusively to himself, like the other princes of the blood ; including a vizier, or minister, gholaums, or confidential guards, peishkidmuts, and other officers ; and several of his younger brothers unprovided with separate governments, have the same ; the prince has a family of about twenty-five children, and an extensive harem, which makes his annual expenditure exceedingly large, and renders him anxious to relieve himself, by establishing his sons in various subordinate governments : thus Budd-e-a-zemaun Meerza has the government of Astrabad and Ashruff ; Timoor Meerza is settled at Amol ; Iskunder Meerza is considered as his father's naib or deputy at Balfroosh ; and Mahomed Cossim Meerza was just about to be established at Tunnacaboon, a district of Mazunderān. This practice generally proves a severe aggravation to the burdens of the respective governments ; for they have to supply the expence of keeping up a petty court and its rapacious officers, while they are relieved from little, if any, of the regular taxes due to the crown.

CHAP. IV.

THE CITY OF SAREE DESCRIBED. — FORTIFICATIONS. — STREETS. — BAZARS. — MOSQUE AND OLD SYCAMORE. — PALACE. — TOWER OF SELM-E-TOOR, TRADITION REGARDING IT. — OTHER ANTIQUITIES IN SAREE. — WATER CISTERNS. — METHOD OF COOLING WATER. — GARDENS, POPULATION. — REVENUES OF MAZUNDERAN. — TROOPS SUPPLIED BY THE PROVINCE. — CLIMATE. — DISEASES. — DISPOSITION OF ITS INHABITANTS. — THEIR APPEARANCE. — DRESS.

I HAD now leisure and opportunity to look around me, and visit all that appeared to be worthy of notice in or around Saree; but as the little information I obtained was acquired piecemeal, I shall endeavour to reduce it all into moderate compass in this place.

The city of Saree is doubtless of great antiquity; it is mentioned by Ferdoosce as a place of importance in the time of his semifabulous heroes; it is constantly spoken of by later and more authentic historians as the capital of Mazunderan; and it for some time was the seat of an absolute and independent monarchy. Tradition attributes its foundation to Tahmuras Deeebund, the third monarch of the Paishdadian, or second race of ancient Persian kings, who frequently exercised his power over demons in this province; but I have not heard any interesting particulars, either relating to this event or its subsequent history, of a nature sufficiently distinct to relate. It was for a long time the residence of Aga Mahomed Khan, who, when he fled from Shiraz upon the death of Kurreem Khan the Vukeel, retreated to this province, and established himself at Saree, long before he gained the supreme power. The town may have been more populous and prosperous in former times than it now is; but there are no traces of its ever having covered more ground. Its circuit does not, I think, exceed two miles; and it is surrounded by a wall and ditch, which till lately have been suffered

to fall so much into disrepair, that a man might, in many places, run down the ditch and up the face of the wall without difficulty. Some repairs were, however, at this time in progress ; workmen were employed in deepening the ditch and heightening the wall, the interior face of which, to the height of a few feet at top, had been revetted with bricks and clay, pointed and coped with mortar ; thus forming a parapet, with a pathway along its top. Square towers, with walls of only two bricks thick, had been built at intervals, and one or two projecting bastions were thrown out to protect the gateways. This they conceived to be fortifying the town according to the principles of European science ; and the work was to be carried round the whole of it.

There is no attempt at order or regularity within the town. The streets are left altogether unpaved, and are often quite impassable in bad weather, owing to the depth of the mud. In a few places there are small raised footpaths at the sides ; in others, a little gravel has been thrown down, to render practicable a particularly bad spot : but in most places the passengers are ankle-deep in clay. Large open spaces are to be met with in many quarters, which are perfect swamps, and which in rainy weather become ponds of water, into which all sorts of filth are thrown. These cannot fail to have a very prejudicial effect upon the health of the inhabitants ; and the trees, which are numerous in all quarters, possibly add to the evil, by retaining much of this excessive moisture about the houses.

The bazars, which all communicate together, are extremely miserable, consisting of two double rows or lanes of shops, few of them better than huts, which cross each other at right angles, and are covered from the sun and rain by sheds constructed of wood, tiles, and thatch. There are a few rows of booths of a still worse description at the end of these ; and a dirty open space in the vicinity of the bazars serves as a market-place, where every Thursday the produce of the country round, as sugar, cotton, grain, fruit, meat, fish, and vegetables, is brought to be exposed for sale. Articles of consumption were plentiful and cheap ; I did not put down the exact prices. Cotton of fair quality was sold at one real and a quarter, or

one shilling and tenpence sterling, for a maun of seven pounds and a quarter. The sugar was dark, moist, and without grain, and sold at about eightpence the same maun weight.

There is a Jumah Musjid in the town. This term is applied to the principal mosque of any place, and either is derived from *Jumah*, the Mahometan Sabbath, or from *Jumah*, which signifies a *crowd*, an *assembly*. That in question is in nowise remarkable, except for a noble old sycamore that overshadows an open space before it. There was another of equal size and antiquity, in the inner court of this mosque, but it was unfortunately destroyed some time ago by fire. The people here have an idea that whenever this species of tree attains the age of one thousand years, it takes fire and burns spontaneously ; and they believe this to have been the case with the tree that was destroyed, as both that and the one which still exists were old beyond all tradition. I know not if this idea respecting the self-combustion of the chinar-tree be common throughout the country or not, but it bears a curious resemblance to the fable of the phoenix.

The palace, which was built by Aga Mahomed Khan, makes no great appearance externally ; but I have been told that it formerly contained much comfortable accommodation ; certainly those parts of it which I saw were far from magnificent. The chief dewankhaneh, or hall of audience, was once fitted up with paintings and mirrors, after the usual Persian taste ; but the former are defaced or faded, and the latter are partly broken or in disrepair. One painting, representing Shah Ishmael cleaving in twain the Aga of the Janisseries before the Turkish emperor Sultan Solyman, a favourite subject of the Persian pencil, certainly possesses considerable merit. Some of the groups fighting and struggling in the foreground are drawn with a degree of spirit and execution not often to be seen in Eastern pictures. The walls of the principal public rooms, for three or four feet above the floor, are lined with Tabreez marble, painted with flowers ; and certain rooms of the more private apartments in the interior, into which I was afterwards admitted, were finished in the same taste. All was clean and tolerably spacious, but without

any splendour whatever. The whole of this palace, though not regularly fortified, is surrounded by a wall, and capable, to a certain extent, of defence.

There are five medressas or colleges in Saree, none of which are in any way conspicuous; and there are likewise five public baths of note, besides several smaller, and a few belonging to private individuals. I know of no other public buildings in the place.

The object undoubtedly most worthy of attention in Saree, is a lofty tower, popularly known by the name of Goombuz-e-Selm-e-Toor. It is of cylindrical shape, with a conical top, and rises to the height of about a hundred feet, its internal diameter being somewhat less than thirty. It is hollow throughout the whole of its height, and there does not appear to have been any means of ascending it. A vault or dome, open in the centre, has been thrown across the interior, near the top. The conical roof does not end in a point, but in a broken irregular frustum, which seems to have been surmounted by some further work. This, we were informed, together with some portion of the interior roof, consisted of wood, and was accidentally burnt some time ago; so that it cannot now be judged whether the timber formed a part of the original structure or not. The extreme top having thus been destroyed, the whole interior of the tower is open to the day-light; but there is no other opening for light or entrance, except an arched door-way, over which may yet be seen the ruins of a lofty porch, that extended to a considerable distance from the tower.

This remarkable fabric is built of burnt brick and mortar put together with the most excellent workmanship. The bricks which are flat squares of a dark red, are extremely hard and well made, and the mortar is now equally indurated with the bricks, so that they cannot be separated without breaking, but are brought away together in great masses. To this circumstance, indeed, the tower owes its safety; for otherwise it would long since have been pulled to pieces for the sake of its materials. From the same circumstance, too, a notion has arisen, which is firmly credited by the town's people, that the mortar was prepared with camel's milk instead of water, and

that to this it owes its preternatural hardness. It has several large rents, however, which were attributed to the effects of earthquakes; and it is said, that Aga Mahomed Khan attempted to destroy it with cannon; but having fired several shot, the holes of which bear witness to his evil intention, with but little effect, he abandoned the attempt altogether.

The style and architecture of this tower entirely resembles that of various fabrics, which I have described in my travels through Khorasān; such as the tombs at Damghān, and particularly the Goombuz-e-caos at Jorjaun. Two belts of inscription in the Cufic character, formed originally of green lacquered bricks, encompass it round; one just under the top, the other, a little below the middle. These served for ornament, as well as to record the object and date of the building; the enamel has decayed in many parts, which renders it difficult now to decipher the inscriptions; but I am told they have been deciphered, and I learned that from them it is inferred, that this is the tomb of Hussam-u-doulah, a descendant of the Dilemee family of sovereigns, who died in the fifth century of the Hejira.* I did not see this translation, nor could the Meerza or any person then at Saree make out the characters; but I had no reason to doubt

* This dynasty of sovereigns, also called the Bouides, were the descendants of a poor fisherman, named Aboo Shujah Bouyah, who lived in a small village of Dilem, one of the divisions of ancient Hyrcania, on the banks of the Caspian sea. An account of the extraordinary rise and fortunes of this person's three sons may be seen in Price's Hist. of Mahomed. vol. ii. p. 252. et seq. Ezz-ul-Moolk, Abu Kalinjer Meerzebaun, also entitled "Hussām-u-doulah," (Sword of the state,) died in the four hundred and fortieth year of the Heg.; but it does not appear where. It is probable, however, that as the Bouides reigned over Mazunderān; their native province, his tomb or mausoleum may have been erected here.

There was another personage, of no small celebrity in his day, who also was entitled Hussam-u-doulah. This was Abul Abbas Tash, who for some time enjoyed the government of Khorasān, under the reign of Ameer Nouh, the seventh monarch of the race of Sāmān. He was displaced in consequence of a faction, headed by the prime minister of his master, and retired to the protection of Fukher-u-doulah, another of the Dilemee sovereigns (being the grandson of Aboo Shujah), whose capital appears to have been Rey or Rhages. He made several unsuccessful efforts to assist his friend Hussam-u-doulah; after which the latter retired, and led a private life until A. Heg. 379, when he was cut off by a pestilential disorder. It is difficult to determine which of these two persons this tomb or monument was intended to commemorate.

the fact of their having been deciphered. The conical top was once covered with square tiles laid flat, but they have in many places fallen off; and though it bears a strong resemblance in its general character to the tower at Jorjaun, it is by no means so perfect as that structure. The interior has been converted into a glass-house, where such coarse bottles, and other articles of that substance, are blown, as the natives can manufacture. The fire which consumed the wood work of the top, is said to have been occasioned by the furnace used for this purpose.

Among the popular traditions held with regard to this tower, it is supposed to be the repository of a mighty treasure secured by a powerful talisman, the secret for obtaining which was discovered by an Indian magician of great skill; but the conditions of the talisman not permitting him to act in person, he employed an agent, like Aladdin, ignorant of the business on which he was sent. To this person the magician entrusted the counterparts of the talisman, which he was carefully to compare with that which he should see in the tower, but he was cautioned particularly against casting his eyes upwards, whatever he might hear going on. The messenger acted according to his instructions, and the moment he had compared the talismans the spell operated; a mighty rushing noise took place, and a prodigious number of pigeons flew out of the open archway. This flight however continued so long, that the messenger, wearied with conjecture, forgot the caution, and looked upwards; upon which the flight of birds suddenly ceased, and a quantity of golden coin came tumbling about his ears. The spell had turned the gold into pigeons, which winged their way to the magician's coffers; but it was broken by the curiosity of his agent, and the gold was so suddenly restored to its original shape, that even the portion passing in the air fell to the ground; and no one, since that hour, has been able to discover the remainder of the treasure.

Besides this tower, there is another of similar construction, but more ruinous, and far less lofty, said to be the tomb of a holy seyyed. There are also two imauinzadehs, in much the same taste, but more closely resembling the tombs at Bostan and Damghan, with conical

tops, one of which has been highly adorned with lacquered tile, bearing inscriptions from the Korān. Both seem now to have been transformed into stables for cattle; three old wooden chests, covering the tombs of the departed saints, were to be seen amongst the dung of these animals, which covered the floor to the depth of several feet.

There can be little doubt, that these tombs, with the Goombuz-e-Selm-e-Toor, are the very buildings which were taken by Hanway for temples of the ancient fire worshippers: they are conspicuous above the wall and houses of the town from a distance, and there never were, as far as I could learn, any other buildings in the place that could answer his description, although I made particular enquiry on the subject; and there certainly are no ruins in or near the town, that could have belonged to any thing of the kind.

Near these tombs there is a very fine old ābumbārā, or covered water cistern, of immense size, which is always used in the hot weather, and from its great depth and capacity, and the thickness of its vaulted roof, which protects the water from the heat of the sun, it is always cool and refreshing. Several of these ancient cisterns are to be found in different quarters of the town; and there is one of modern date, built, as I was informed, by the mother of Mahomed Koolee Meerza. They use another method in this place for cooling their water, which I had not before seen; a tall and straight tree being selected, they cut off most of the branches, and fasten a tall pole to its top, so as to form a sort of high mast; to the top of this, pulleys are fixed, by which, with cords, they hoist up earthen jars filled with water; the current of air at that height from the earth is said to cool these rapidly.

There are several ancient Imaumzadehs and tombs of saints in the vicinity of Saree, particularly one in a village close to the bridge over the Thedjen, and one called Imaumzadeh Caussim, at the foot of the hills, a few miles distant from town. I frequently employed a portion of the forenoon in visiting these places, but they had little of novelty to make them worth describing. They closely resembled the tombs at Saree and Bostam, being round, square, or octagonal towers, with high conical tops, and probably might date from about

the same period. Their greatest interest arose from situation : they were built in recesses of the hills by rivulets, or in groves of noble trees, and were always picturesque : but as that which is interesting to the view will often fatigue in repeated descriptions, I have been silent on many scenes that gave me much pleasure, because I found it impossible to transfer to paper that charm which they received from natural beauty.

For a like reason I omit the description of several gardens near Saree, the delight of its former sovereigns. Persian gardens have little of variety at best, and these are chiefly hastening to decay, because the prince, who inherits to an excessive degree, the family failing of stinginess, will not consent to any outlay, even with a profitable result in prospect. He has himself established a garden, which is well stocked with fruit-trees, but which, in other respects, is paltry.

I have found that my attempts to ascertain the population of Saree were attended with the imperfect result too common to such enquiries. According to the best accounts, the town contains between three and four thousand houses ; but as it is the seat of a court, and the residence of several noblemen attached to it, many of these houses contain from twenty to one hundred persons, so that a higher average than usual must be allowed to each house ; probably there may be thirty to forty thousand souls within the walls. The revenues received from the town are but small, as indeed they are from the whole province of Mazunderān, including Astrabad ; for, as the king places more confidence in the natives of these provinces, than in those of any other part of his dominions, he commutes the monied revenues for the service of twelve thousand toffunchees, and four thousand horsemen, who should be in readiness for service at all times. The pay of the foot soldiers, I think, is fixed at five, and of the horsemen at eight tomauns a-year ; a sum insufficient to maintain the men, were it even regularly paid ; but this is by no means the case, and they remain in their own villages employed in agriculture, or trades, like the rest of the inhabitants, seldom or never called upon for duty. The Prince retains

only about five hundred horse within call, and even they are but seldom summoned; for he, like every member of the royal family entrusted with a government, entertains a body of gholams, or confidential guards, in constant pay, who perform the routine of duty, and execute all services of importance: the others are only called out occasionally, when the prince requires an unusual display, or upon any sudden emergency.

The truth is, that Mazunderān, in common with the greater part of Persia, having for many years been unassailed by foreign enemies, its rulers, as well as its inhabitants, have naturally forgot their warlike habits, and have become so unaccustomed to all military arrangements, that they seem to have lost sight of the wisdom, if not the necessity of providing against future contingencies. And if danger were imminent, it is more than possible, that the improvident aversion to all sorts of outlay which characterises the royal family, and is one great bane of Persia, would in this place, as elsewhere, prevent any expenditure for the purpose of entertaining an effective body of troops.

I observed about twenty *topechees**, or artillery men, exercising on a plain before one of the gates; it was understood that the prince intended to augment these to fifty, and to place them in charge of about twenty pieces of cannon that are attached to Mazunderān and Astrabad. These are at best very inefficient; and Mazunderān, happily for itself, does not require such defences; its best bulwarks are, its bewildering and impenetrable forests, its swamps, its thickly intersected country, its deep roads; its climate, which, when rainy and foggy, increases its natural difficulties; when dry and fair, above, is unwholesome or fatal to strangers. Finally, its men always brave, formerly expert in the use of arms, and who would still, if treated with humanity and kindness, become attached and steady soldiers.

The weather, during the time I remained at Saree, was by no means such as to impress me with a favourable opinion of its climate.

* From *tope*, a gun.

Out of thirteen days which I spent in the town and neighbourhood, not more than three were really fine, the rest were cloudy and rainy. The thermometer was pretty stationary at 56° ; one morning, during a cold wind from the mountains, it sunk to 54° , while in the fine and sunny weather it rose to 64° and 65° . I tried Leslie's hygrometer during one of the finest of these days, when it sunk only to 40° . Rain is observed generally to come from the Caspian;—when it is dark in that quarter, the inhabitants are sure of wet weather, and when clear to the seaward, whatever clouds may hang over the mountains in the south-west, they are nearly sure of fine weather; and the mountains soon become clear in their turn.

It appears, from all the information I could procure on the subject, that the climate of Mazunderān, in general, is capricious, not naturally divided into wet and dry, cold and hot seasons. I have been told by many of the inhabitants, that it sometimes sets in fair for three months at a time, but these same three months in the ensuing year may be wet. The climate, however, on the whole, may certainly be termed a wet one, for there is not a month of the year, in which the inhabitants can rely on dry weather. The months of winter and spring, that is to say, from December to April, inclusive, are the wettest. It is the same with regard to cold; in the middle of winter, the inhabitants are sometimes forced to throw off their warm clothing, and at other times, in the hottest period of summer, to have recourse to their poosteens or sheepskin cloaks, and furs. Snow often falls heavily, and though it does not remain so long as in the upper country, to the south, it is a mistake to think that it does not lie at all. Two years before my visit, nearly all the cypress-trees in and about Saree, were broken down and destroyed by a heavy fall of snow; and they had by no means recovered at this time. The cold of summer is damp and unwholesome, causing many diseases. Rheumatisms and dropsies are common; and complaints of the eyes still more so. I saw many cases of cataract, others with white specks, thicknesses of the external coats and vessels, and frequently a strange loss of sight, without much appearance of external disease.

Many of the inhabitants certainly had a sallow look, but others were remarkably stout and athletic.

Were I to judge of the character and disposition of the Mazunderanees from my own experience, I should not have much to say in their favour. The highest of the nobles, who have spent great part of their life in service at court, and out of their own province, partake of the general characteristics of the Persian nobility. Those of a secondary class, in common with all who rank a little above the vulgar, are vain, ignorant, and arrogant; they consider themselves as persons of mighty importance, superior to all strangers, with whom, indeed, they dislike to hold any intercourse; and as to paying the least attention to a "Kaffer Feringhee," or unbelieving Frank, the idea would never present itself to their minds. I, at least, had no reason to boast of the attention I received from the Mazunderanees; not one of the nobles visited me, except those whom their station in the prince's service, or accidental circumstances, compelled to do so; nor do I believe they would have done even this, however long I might have remained, unless led by curiosity, or the hope of advantage. Their ignorance of every thing beyond their own province is profound, to a degree hardly credible; and is often evinced by absurd questions or surmises, which appear the more ludicrous from the grave air of pretention with which they are uttered. Their bigotry in religious matters is great, but it is chiefly in forms; for there are few who do not transgress every article of inhibition — all of them drink strong liquors, and eat opium: the prince himself, with all his suite, regale themselves unreservedly with the *Maw-ul-Hyat*.*

The poorer classes are extremely ignorant, and, according to our ideas, can be considered but very slightly civilized. The eager curiosity with which they surround and question a stranger, reminded me of the Highlanders of Scotland; but they have not the native politeness and civility of our countrymen. Wherever they meet a stran-

* This is a spirit distilled from vegetable substances, oranges, sugar, &c. which those who love to indulge in such draughts, choose to consider lawful (*Hullaul*), because it is not wine or distilled from wine; it is a strong aromatic spirit, as intoxicating as any other of the usual proof.

ger, they interrogate him most closely as to his business, his country, his religion, his name, whence he is come, and whither he is going ; and these questions are put in a tone and manner that claim a right to be answered, and are often very disagreeable ; for it is not always possible to parry them with good humour, or to answer them with safety. This does not proceed from an insolent disposition, but is the effect of custom ; they have been used to ask these questions unchecked, and can see no impropriety in urging them in all cases. Those among them who pretend to education, particularly the Moollahs, are very fond of engaging a stranger in religious discussions ; but as they are not over cautious in restraining their temper when they have the worst of the argument, it is a description of conversation which the traveller should avoid. They are by no means so respectful in their demeanour as the peasantry in those parts of Persia more frequented by strangers. They will attempt, for instance, to gratify their curiosity by looking over your shoulder when you are drawing or writing ; sometimes they will seat themselves by your side, when you are busily occupied in any thing they desire to understand ; will laugh loud, without respect for your presence, if what they observe happens to please them ; and, in short, are frequently disagreeably familiar ; but this, I think, proceeds from ignorance, and not from any disposition to insult.

In their appearance, the inhabitants of Mazunderān differ from those of the rest of Persia only in being generally of a darker complexion ; and very swarthy or almost black men are met with oftener here than in other places. The high and hard brown features of the peasantry, grinning from under the cap instead of the bonnet, often reminded me of those of Scotland. The lower and middling classes, when their beard becomes grizzled, generally prefer dyeing it with hinna, which changes it to a fiery red colour, instead of indigo leaves, the dye commonly used in other parts of Persia, which gives it a deep black hue : the majority of elderly people are to be seen with these red beards. Their dress differs little in essentials from the national Persian garb. Every man who travels, whether mounted or on foot, clothes himself in a pair of shulwars, or immense trunk

trowsers, into which the skirts of his ulcaluc or vest are stuffed, and the fore-skirts of the kabba or outer robe being tucked up, the back-skirts left hanging look like those of a coat or jacket. They bind their legs in rolls of cloth instead of stockings, and their feet are cased in a pair of shoes called charuck, made after the fashion of the Koords, like leather bags drawn round the instep and ankle, in puckers, by a thong.

The women here, as elsewhere, use the chudder or veil thrown over their person when they go out; these are made of silk, or of cotton cloth checked; the check is sometimes blue, in large squares, sometimes red, and occasionally red and green. They draw upon their legs a sort of stocking called chāk-chor, which takes in the trowsers like a boot; and over these they wear the usual green and high-heeled slipper. It is surprising to see through what deep mud they can make their way without soiling their stockings, or without even dirtying their shoes very much.

CHAP. V.

CONTINUED RESIDENCE AT SAREE. — DESCRIPTION OF RAMZAUN BEG'S HOUSE AND FURNITURE. — ANECDOTES REGARDING HIM. — HIS WIFE. — HIS SON. — HIS MAHOMEDAN PREJUDICES OVERCOME. — PART OF HIS HISTORY. — PRESENTS OF THE AUTHOR TO THE PRINCE. — CALLED ON TO VISIT THE PRINCE'S SICK SISTER. — HER CASE. — THE INTERVIEW. — PRINCE EXAMINES THE AUTHOR'S DRAWINGS AND INSTRUMENTS. — SHOWS SOME OF HIS OWN CURIOSITIES. — COVETS A SPYING GLASS OF THE AUTHOR'S. — EXPRESS RETURNS FROM TEHRAN. — DISMISSION OF MEERZA-ABDOOL-REZAK.

DURING the fortnight of our stay at Saree, we continued to live with Ramzaun Beg, who soon became perfectly at his ease with, and, I believe, not displeased with my company. Being thus quite domesticated, I enjoyed a valuable peep behind the curtain, not often to be obtained in a Persian family. The ruling passion of our host, as I have before remarked, was for fine houses and elegant apartments, which, as he was in easy circumstances, he was enabled to indulge in ; and being proud of his taste, lost no opportunity of showing the existing proofs of it to all his friends. I have already mentioned the neatness of the apartments I occupied, which, in fact, being his own dewankhaneh, were likewise shared by himself. Pleased with the praises I bestowed upon his taste, he so far conquered his Mahomedan prejudices as to take me through his family apartments and harem. These were really worth seeing, on account of the system and convenience of their arrangement, as well as the neatness and almost splendour with which they were fitted up. He had constructed three distinct rooms, with little suites attached to them, which he informed me were for winter, spring, and summer, each of them appropriately furnished ; that for winter having the walls matted, and partly covered with handsome numuds or felt carpets, to

keep out the cold ; while those for spring and summer were proportionably more airy. All of them were uniformly finished with handsome stucco ornaments, and silk or velvet curtains, brocade cushions, rich carpets, and the finest numuds. There were several smaller apartments fitted up like boudoirs, and ornamented in a very tasteful manner with painting and embroidered work, though the painting was generally inferior to the other decorations. Several other conveniences and keeping-places, by no means common in Persian houses, attracted my attention ; and a world of nick-nacks, both native and European, which he seemed to have collected only for the pleasure of looking at, were to be seen in every corner. He had, for example, a complete tea and coffee apparatus, never soiled by use ; refined sugar of Europe, kept in glass bottles for show ; several articles of cut crystal, Chinese boxes, English tea-caddies, cases of knives and forks, besides numerous other articles, the uses of all which, however, he was totally ignorant of. Yet this amused him greatly as he changed and re-changed their arrangement, and contemplated them from time to time with great satisfaction. I particularly remarked a number of large glass bottles, ranged upon shelves in a sort of court, to which he alone had access. These, he slyly confessed to me one day, held wine, of which indeed the old gentleman was a great admirer. He had, I discovered, some disposition to sooffeeism, or freethinking, and took care accordingly to enjoy the privileges of a dervish, although not so bold as to dispense with the externals of religion. On the contrary, he was strict in the performance of all rules and ceremonies in public, though in private he thought it unnecessary to constrain himself. I have frequently known the hour of prayer arrive, without the least attention being paid to it by my worthy friend Ramzaun. Indeed, at that hour the old gentleman was far otherwise engaged, for among other laudable effects of his dervish habits, or more probably of the debauched practices of his youth, he had become an opium-eater, and regularly every night about sunset took his dose, consisting of two pills, each about two grains. I believe he also swallowed a similar quantity in the morning.

It was curious to watch the old gentleman as the period of his diurnal indulgence approached. He was generally seated quite cross and irritable, in his accustomed place by the window, moulding the pills in his hand, whilst he waited impatiently for the moment when he was to be made happy. He never allowed himself to anticipate the fixed time, lest, as he said, the desire might increase upon him, and he was fully sensible of that danger. As the luxurious and quiet influence of the drug stole over him, the harsh expression of his features would give place by degrees to a tranquil and happy calm. Woe to the menial or dependant who should venture to approach him before the appointed time; but in about twenty minutes afterwards, all was good humour, and he was ready to converse and to joke with all about him. Frequently, as we sat together, he has described these sensations, while I, on my part, could see them working in his countenance; and he sometimes spoke to me with fear of the consequence of the habit, as if he believed it would one day destroy him; but he always comforted himself by observing, that he would not permit it to grow upon him, and asserted he had not increased his dose for many years.

But though the old gentleman broke through the rules so far as to show the private part of his house, the female inhabitants were always invisible. It is true, I could hear their voices, and was often made sensible of their vicinity by sounds, perhaps not always unintentional. Sometimes, on returning to my rooms after a forenoon's expedition, I saw proofs of their active curiosity in the derangement of my goods and chattels, which they had turned over and over to gratify that powerful passion, which, in Persia as well as in Europe, men choose to say belongs to the opposite sex. On these occasions old Ramzaun Beg would mutter a few indistinct threats, and general execrations, but it was evident he never dared to interfere further. I found, indeed, that he had a wife who took care to maintain her own authority in the management of his house, and before I had been a week his guest, the poor man could not help opening his mind to me on the subject of his domestic grievances. This lady, his wife, the mother of one son now alive, and several children who

had died, was so much of a termagant, that her poor husband both dreaded and disliked her. She would have her own way, he declared, in every thing; and to this Ramzaun might have consented, had she permitted him an equal liberty; but this was far from being the case. The good lady, if the truth must be told, was stricken in years, so indeed was he; but he thought he might avail himself of the permission granted by law, and "renew his age," as they term it, by a union with a younger companion. Accordingly, he made choice of a young female, whom he sought to take into his bosom as another wife; hereupon, however, his old helpmate most resolutely interfered, and forbade the banns, or rather denied the young lady all entry into his house. Some time afterwards, and when he had given up that point, he attempted clandestinely to solace himself with the company of a handsome slave girl; but the old lady got wind of this intrigue, and soon drove the interloper from the field. These circumstances Ramzaun Beg related with bitter complaints, avowing that his wife was certainly by far the most unreasonable woman on the face of the earth; "since," added he, "when she had ceased to be of any use to me herself, she still pertinaciously refuses to allow me to supply myself with those who might be so."

But, alas! this was not the only domestic plague of poor Ramzaun Beg. His son, he told us, was the cause of much distress to him; for he was a light-headed foolish youth, as he called him, who thought only of wearing fantastical dresses, of drinking wine with companions of his own stamp, and practising all manner of extravagant absurdities. Some idea may be entertained of Persian delicacy and feeling, when the father of a family could think thus of laying open to strangers the grievous state of his domestic relations. The complaint against the son was made to the Meerza and myself the first day after our arrival; and his other grievances, as I have said above, a very few days after. He worked himself up to a perfect fury in declaiming against this son; but when we begged him to state some particular enormity actually committed by him, he was unable to mention any thing, except such trifles as might naturally be expected

from a lively young man, too severely restrained by a severe old father.

After the father had retired, the son himself came by stealth to see us, and he on his part soon began, though not so loudly, to make us acquainted with the ill-treatment which he had suffered. And, to say the truth, his complaints seemed better founded; for he assured us, that though willing and anxious to be employed, his father, who seemed to have taken a prejudice against him, had always refused to comply with his wishes; but had never suggested any thing on his own part. In short, his life was a burthen to him, and he sought to drown his misery the best way he could, amongst companions and friends. To prove that he was capable of shifting for himself, he brought us some of his writing; both the composition and penmanship of which interested the Meerza so much in his favour, that he took the first opportunity of speaking to the father on the subject; and telling him that his son was really a lad of much capacity and merit, whom he ought to assist in getting forward in the world. "What," exclaimed the testy old man, with a movement of impatience, "what are his fine writing and good sense to me? I want something solid, somebody that will stand well in my place when I am gone, one that will keep my lamp lit when I am in the grave. He may be well enough to others, but to me, unfortunately, he is nothing, for I have not the smallest dependence either on his prudence or his conduct." It was clear that some unhappy misunderstanding had taken place between them, not likely to be re-adjusted by the efforts of meddling strangers; so we quietly let the subject drop.

Although Ramzaun Beg had no dislike to the privileges which his approach to Sooffeeism enabled him to enjoy, he was yet too much of a neophyte, and perhaps felt still too dependent on public opinion, to brave the censure of the mosque, and openly assert his freedom of opinion. When I first arrived, he made no scruples about eating out of the same dish with me, and our meals were established on this footing:—our fingers met in the same pillaw, and our sherbet was sipped with the same spoon. In the course of a few

days, however, I observed that there were separate dishes, bowls, and spoons, placed on the dinner cloth ; and upon one occasion, when I happened to touch a spoon which he had appropriated, he refrained from again using it. The next day this difference of deportment was still more remarkable ; for he did not come at all to the afternoon's meal, and a very small share of eatables indeed was placed before the Meerza, myself, and an accidental guest. Some time afterward our host entered, his heart opened by his evening's dose of opium, which we surmised from its effects to have been greater than usual ; and then the Meerza, by a little management, discovered that the Moollahs of the place had been censuring him for eating and associating with an unbelieving European ; one who consequently was unclean, and whose touch was pollution.* " I am astonished," said the Meerza, in reply to this admission, " that you, Ramzaun Beg, a man of information and of sense, should allow yourself to be thus imposed upon ; do you not see, that these Moollahs are jealous of you, they think you are likely to obtain presents from this Elchee, which they are quite aware they cannot partake in ; therefore they seek to separate you from him, and to put enmity between the host and the guest. Do you know, my friend, or do you not know," added he, warming as he went on, " that this Frank repeats the La-illa-he-il-ullah as you may have heard him do this evening more than once ; and if you know anything of your own faith, you should be aware, that he who does that cannot be unclean ; ask your friends, the Moollahs, this, and you will see they dare not say otherwise."

This remonstrance of the Meerza's had evidently a strong effect on the mind of the old gentleman ; whose head, never of the strongest, was now by no means clear. Next morning our rice was brought in for breakfast on a single plate ; and while I waited a moment to see if another was coming, our host exclaimed " Bismillah !" and fell

* The Persian word to express this sentiment is Nejjis, and is one of strong meaning, which not only describes every thing unclean, polluted, and forbidden by law, but is also expressive of the disgust such things occasion to the faithful. The English word " abomination," in its Scriptural sense, perhaps may translate it better than any other.

to. I could not help asking him the meaning of this change of arrangement; "Do you not still," said I, "consider me as unclean?" "If so, how do you think of eating with me?" "Oh," replied he, with a smile, "you say La-illa-he-il-ullah, do you not? and "whoever says so, cannot be unclean in my eyes. — Bismillah, "Bismillah, fall to, fall to."

During the course of our various evening confabulations, I gathered from my host much information regarding the prince's method of government, his own habits, and those of his family. There was not, indeed, much novelty in these details, but they were interesting as confirming what I had before heard. The history and fate of Ramzaun Beg himself afforded a good specimen of the conduct which the royal family of Persia too generally pursue towards their servants. It appears that before the appointment of Mahomed Koolee Meerza to the government of Mazunderan, Ramzaun Beg, was a person of considerable consequence, and large property, in land, villages, cattle, horses, and other valuables, which he enjoyed quietly; accepting only occasionally such employments as the king or his more immediate governors offered him. When the Prince arrived, he made himself useful, accepted service with him, and became by degrees his counsellor, his treasurer, and, in short, his factotum. But as the prince grew better acquainted with his government, and the extent of his patronage, new servants and new favourites came about him, so that the star of Ramzaun Beg's fortune began speedily to decline. The royal family of Persia, in true despotic taste, have a custom of espousing any woman for whom they may have taken a fancy, or of whose beauty they may have heard through some of the infamous instruments kept constantly on the watch for that purpose, and after retaining the poor wretches for a few weeks, until weary of them, brutally dispose of them, as a mark, forsooth, of their royal favour, to some of their servants, as wives. This often serves many purposes, besides ministering to their own vicious appetites; it supersedes the costly necessity of keeping too many wives; it saves a more expensive mark of regard to the person thus compli-

mented; and it frequently becomes the sure means of extorting from the favoured individual a large present; if not of rendering him a sort of tributary for life, or as long as his wealth may last.

Such a testimony of esteem was bestowed by the prince upon our host, but he (as the reader has seen) happened to be already provided with a wife, a lady of good family and high spirit, who would not brook at all being thrown into the back ground by the ex-sultana, or even to share with her a divided bed and board: the natural consequence was, continual brawls, which effectually destroyed the poor man's peace. But he endured it all, until it came to such a pitch, that one of the ladies, in some jealous fit, thought proper to attempt to poison him; upon which he considered it high time to interfere, and to free himself at least of one of his plagues, by turning the late royal consort fairly out of doors.

Whether the prince was really displeased at this proceeding, or, as is more probable, made it a pretext for his future hostile conduct to Ramzaun Beg is not easy to determine; but the change very soon became apparent. The first symptom was a peremptory demand of two hundred tomauns, followed up by a rapid series of exactions under various pretences; his farms were plundered, his cattle and sheep carried off; people of all ranks, guests or servants of the prince, were quartered upon him continually; until, having no room in his houses, he was forced to supply them with tents. At last the public accounts connected with his land and villages, which had not been looked into for years, were demanded and examined; and a balance of six or seven thousand tomauns brought against him, with an intimation that he must immediately pay it up. He had not the money, but by dint of selling and borrowing, he raised a sum which was accepted of, and the balance, all but one thousand five hundred was remitted; for this his sheep and cattle, to the amount of several thousand head, were taken as pledges. The prince kept these for a considerable time, and, probably, perceiving that no more money was likely to be extracted in this way, returned them, upon Ramzaun Beg contracting to build a certain portion of the city wall, at a valuation of two tomauns a yard, in commut-

ation of all he still owed. This, the poor old man says, cost him more a great deal than his original debt, or the pledge which had been forced from him ; in short, that first and last, the prince has wrested from him to the value of ten thousand tomauns. " And this," said he, " is all the reward of my faithful services. I was rich " and happy, and he has reduced me to poverty and wretchedness. " I had houses and possessions ; I had thirty capital horses in my " stable ; with gold and silver furniture to match them. I had a " thousand pieces of china in my warehouse ; with rich silk, shawls " of Cashmere, carpets of Herāt, dishes and equipages of gold and " of silver ; in short every thing complete in my establishment. I " was happy to be always surrounded by my friends, and to enter- " tain strangers as my guests. I delighted in making rich presents, " and in returning threefold what was presented to me. But now, " all is gone, and the mortification of having suffered so much in- " gratitude alone remains. I am disgusted at seeing my substance " constantly devoured by those who neither cared for me, nor were " even invited by me, and have pulled down my stables, and dis- " posed of my horses. I have also given up all my houses except " this small one, and permanently reduced my establishment, which " I could no longer afford to maintain. And now my heart is " cold ; I have done with the world ; I neither seek nor will accept " of service. They call me *nazir* of the *sepanah* * ; but I do not " act, nor does the prince care that I should. He has plenty of " new and more favourite servants, and dislikes the sight of one " whom he has so deeply injured, and from whom he can now hope " for no advantage. I have no more money, nor do I wish to ob- " tain it. I live as I can, on the wreck of my possessions, and do " not desire to hoard that which would at last go only to enrich an " ungrateful master."

Of all this, no doubt a great part is true, for I gathered much in confirmation of it from other quarters ; at all events, it is too faithful a representation of what constantly occurs in Persian courts ;

* Seraglio, female establishment.

but there is reason to believe that my worthy host somewhat exaggerated the account of his ruin and his poverty. That his circumstances were easy, was to be seen from his style of living; but it no doubt was politic and even necessary for him to reduce the scale of his expenditure, and affect poverty, in order to preserve that part of his property which remained after all these tyrannical exactions.

During the first few days of my stay at Saree, intimation of the expectations entertained by the prince of receiving a handsome present from me, was so frequently repeated, that it became necessary to decide, first, whether I possessed the means of fulfilling this expectation; and, if so, what the present was to consist of. After much consideration, the Meerza and I selected the following articles:—three pièces of fine muslin; a thermometer; two English pocket-knives, three bottles of essence of peppermint (a drug greatly prized by all Asiatics); a bottle of eau de luce, and one of Smyth's smelling salts. These, with a long account of their virtues and uses, were to be presented by Ramzaun Beg, with an apology for their unworthiness, which our long absence from home, and the expence of our tedious journey, we trusted would induce the prince to excuse. Fortunately, every thing met with the approbation of his royal highness; and it was intimated to me, that had the day been better, he would have sent for me to the palace, in order that I might furnish a more particular explanation of their uses and qualities. Such, indeed, was considered the value of the offering, that the vizier, Meerza Jaffair, seized hold of Ramzaun Beg the instant he quitted the presence, and entreated him to endeavour to procure something similar for him, if it were but an English penknife; promising in his turn to use his influence with the prince in obtaining for me a handsome khelut, or dress of honour. These solicitations were repeated many times afterwards, both by Meerza Jaffair and Meerza Sauduc, although neither of them had paid me the slightest attention, and with an earnestness so disgusting, that I requested Ramzaun Beg to tease me no further on the subject, adding, that in making presents I was guided in some degree at least by feelings of regard and

gratitude, and that, as I had cause for neither towards the persons in question, I would give them nothing.

Next day, about ten o'clock, I received a summons to attend the prince, which I was obliged to obey, although suffering under a severe headache. As Ramzaun Beg suggested that he might desire to see my sextant and drawings, according to the wish he had before expressed, I took them with me to the palace. Upon my arrival, I was introduced to a person who sat upon a musnud in one of the dewankhanehs, and with a ceremony, which, as I had not heard his name, induced me to take him for a prince of the blood ; but seeing the chief physician, who had remained standing in the presence of the prince, seat himself before this person, I was tempted to inquire who he might be, and found it was Ismael Khan, a nobleman of the Kadjer tribe, who had married a sister of the prince, and who therefore was entitled to a portion of the distinctions and respect due to one of the royal family. After a few compliments, Ismael Khan, in a tone intended to impress me with the importance of his communication, and the high honour done to me, informed me that the prince, hearing of my skill in medicine, had sent for me to visit a patient in his own family, no less a person than his sister, a daughter of the king, and now his (Ismael Khan's) wife ; that this august person was afflicted with a complaint which had baffled the skill of all the native physicians ; and that his royal highness, as well as himself, was very anxious to know if I could discover the ailment, and whether any of the remedies I had sent to the prince were of a nature to do her good. The chief physician and others present here chimed in with a chorus of blessings upon the prince, his sister, and Ismael Khan—of the high honour done me, and the duty it laid me under to exert myself to the utmost. As soon as the tumult of compliments had ceased, I observed in reply, that it was unfortunate the object of my visit had not been made known to me before I left home ; that I should then have prepared myself better to be of use ; that if the physician who attended the lady had waited upon me with an account of the symptoms of her complaint, and of the remedies already used, I should perhaps have been more

able to give an opinion, than now, taken off my guard, I could possibly be.

Upon this, the chief physician commenced, with very little delicacy, a description of her illness and symptoms, which was rendered quite unintelligible by his desire to wrest them so as to suit his own theories, and by the jargon of hot and cold influences, which the Persian physicians continually apply both to remedies and distempers. I observed, in return, that I really had not much skill in the diseases of women; that I had written some days before to Tehran, from whence I had some expectation that a friend of mine, a great and wise physician, would come to join me in a few days, in which case the patient would have excellent attendance; nevertheless, if they thought the delay might be injurious, I would, if they wished it, visit the sick lady, and assist in relieving her, to the best of my ability. They replied, that the shahzadeh* was in great pain, and that any thing was better than delay; that, consequently, I had better see her, and determine what I could do. Ismael Khan then left the room to prepare his wife for my visit; and the chief eunuch asked me to his apartments until all should be ready.

The prince meanwhile sent a tray of choice viands for my breakfast, which, from my illness, I was not able to do honour to, and which were accordingly very quickly dispatched by those in attendance. But rest, which I really did want, was not allowed me; for I was persecuted with entreaties from the chief eunuch, the hakeem bashee†, and Meerza Jaffcir (who, now in attendance on the prince, was not sorry to gratify his curiosity) to show them my sextant and drawings. In a quarter of an hour, however, I was relieved by a message requiring my presence in the private apartments, and was accordingly conducted into the sacred precincts of the harem by the chief eunuch and Ismael Khan, who was now anxious on account of his wife, and seemed desirous to make amends for a little stiffness and hauteur which he had shown at my first introduction; he took me by

* This term, which means "born of a king," is applied equally to the female, as to the male royal offspring, — prince or princess.

† Chief physician.

the arm, asked me why I had not been to visit him, observed that it would have been by no means proper or kind to leave Mazunderari without seeing him, who was very fond of the English; and when we approached the apartment, he very pressingly, and with some show of feeling, intreated me to try my utmost, and endeavour to give relief to the sick shahzadeh. I promised my best assistance, but carefully refrained from giving any hopes which might not be realized; and we passed onwards, the eunuchs preceding us, and keeping every creature out of sight; so that, though we might observe symptoms of female inhabitants, the place was quite silent. At length, on reaching a third court, surrounded by various apartments, we entered by a door where there was a good deal of bustle, and where it appeared that the invalid was waiting to receive us.

The apartment we now entered was rather dark, and at first several persons moving about in the middle of the room prevented me from seeing what was passing; and I only observed a curtain of Indian shawl held by two attendants before a bed placed in the corner. On Ismael Khan's bowing towards it, I followed his example, believing it to be a mark of respect to the royal blood, exacted even from husbands when of lower rank than their wives; but as Ismael Khan continued standing, I looked around for the cause, and saw the prince himself, who had been hid from us by the attendants, seated on a cushion in the middle of the room. I repaired my apparent disrespect by bowing profoundly to the prince, and explaining to Ismael Khan that I had not before been aware of his royal highness's presence; upon which the prince spoke to me kindly, welcoming and bidding me to take a seat near the bed. He added, that being desirous to know what could be done for the patient, his own sister, he had himself come to hear what I had to say on the subject. I repeated what I had before told Ismael Khan, and begged his royal highness to permit me to make further inquiries as to the shahzadeh's illness. The replies in answer to my queries were at best uncertain and contradictory, and I asked leave to feel the lady's pulse; this was permitted, the hand being passed from under the curtain, so that little but the tops of the fingers could

be seen, and nothing of consequence was indicated by this method. I thought there was some tendency to fever; but Ismael Khan told me that this might proceed from some wine which had been given at the suggestion of the physicians.

The prominent symptoms in my patient were a pain in the left shoulder and back, sometimes in the waist and loins, but originating in the right side; these pains had continued for near fifteen days. I accordingly suspected that the liver might be affected, but thought the pains might be only rheumatic, and it was not easy, as things stood, to contrive means for ascertaining the truth. I therefore told the prince that it was essential to examine the state of the liver, by feeling whether there was any hardness or tenderness in the right side; upon which both he and Ismael Khan rose, and went in order to feel the princess's side. They could detect no tumour; on the other hand, the patient acknowledged that she felt pain; but the result of the examination was so unsatisfactory, that I could by no means venture to decide upon a mode of treatment from any thing indicated. I therefore addressed myself to the prince: I told him that I was perfectly aware of the custom which prevented women from appearing unveiled before any but their own family, and still more from submitting to the touch of a stranger; but that, under existing circumstances, it was impossible for me to hazard an opinion on the shahzadeh's case, without a more exact knowledge of certain circumstances, which could only be done in a satisfactory manner by feeling her side myself, and seeing her tongue; that I begged him to believe I was quite unswayed in what I did by any unworthy motive of personal curiosity; that I did not expect it to be complied with, and could by no means promise for success, even if it should; but that, situated as I was with the health, or perhaps the life of a human being, and especially of his sister, at stake, I felt it my duty to make the present representation to his royal highness. The prince and the husband talked together for some time before they turned to me, but said little in answer to what I had observed; and I soon saw my former belief confirmed, that they would rather let the princess die than permit her to be seen by a European. The

prince asked me if the essence of peppermint I had given him would do her good ; but I told him it had better be let alone until her ailment should have been more accurately ascertained ; judging, however, from what I had heard, I should be disposed to recommend a dose of calomel, and some other medicine. He inquired into its properties and nature ; but I observed, that I could not easily make myself intelligible to his royal highness ; and that, if he pleased to send his confidential physician, with any others of his servants, to my lodging, I should be glad to explain it to them, with my opinion of the princess's case, by the help of my companion the Meerza, who was better acquainted with their medical terms than I could be. This was agreed to, and the sick lady being fatigued by the length of the visit, we all left the room, the prince observing to me that he should come out immediately to look at the things I had brought for his inspection. I was accordingly conducted back in the same way by Ismael Khan and the chief eunuch ; but in my return I heard many titters and smothered exclamations, and a side-glance or two convinced me that more than one bright and curious eye was bent after the feringhee tahbeeb *.

The prince soon entered, and as this was not an audience, but rather a private visit for his own amusement, he showed nothing of state either in his dress or attendance ; there was none of the affected haughtiness on his part, nor of the cringing respect and submissive obedience on that of his attendants, which I had seen on public occasions ; throughout the interview, there was an ease of manner amongst all the party, which by degrees arose to a wonderful degree of familiarity. The prince put a multitude of questions to me, respecting the use of the various articles I had presented him with, after which he viewed my sextant, compass, and drawings, all of which appeared to give him great delight. He did not like the pencil sketches nearly so well as the few coloured drawings I had with me, and seemed to think he had some belonging to himself, that were at least as good as mine. He asked me if I had a "Tehan Nu-

* Tahbeeb, as well as hakeem, signifies physician in Persia.

mah*," (a raree-show-box,) and on being told that I had not, he informed me with an air of no small exultation, that *he* had one, and would show it to me. It was brought, and proved to be one of those large magnifying glasses, fitted up to show a set of coarse and gaudy prints, all of which he displayed with an expression of childish triumph. He then put some of my drawings before it, and was so highly pleased with the effect produced by those that were coloured, that I began to tremble for my sketches: — but his own brilliantly-coloured prints fortunately carried the day, and mine were returned.

In viewing this show, the company, one and all, seemed to forget themselves in the delight which it produced. The prince got up nimbly from his musnud, and placed himself in the middle of the room, in order to show it in the best light — the others, physicians, ministers, servants, all squatted round him promiscuously, roaring out their various opinions and applause, and calling familiarly to one another by their names, not omitting the prince himself, whom they only distinguished by the simple title of "shahzadeh." It was a fine contrast to the solemn formality of an audience, and a curious specimen of the secret history of high life in Persia. I enjoyed it greatly, in spite of my head-ache, and being admitted for the time to fellowship with them, joined heartily in the uproar and the glee.

This amusing and highly characteristic scene, however, came to a close; the Jehan Numah was carried off, my drawings collected, the prince returned to his musnud and pomposity, and some degree of order was restored. I then found, that however amused by the scene that had just passed, the prince had by no means lost sight of his ruling passion. Among the appendages of my sextant, one of the small telescopes had struck his fancy, and he asked me for it without ceremony, observing that it would answer finely as a little hand glass, through which he could view the country to great advantage, from the top of his garden-house. I pretended for a time not to under-

* Literally, "world-shower," an expression also applied to lofty buildings, from whence an extensive view is obtained. It is applied to the toy in question, in consequence of the number of views which accompany it, and which it displays in so fascinating a manner by its magnifying powers.

stand what he meant, hoping that he would see how disagreeable it was to me, and drop the pursuit; but the officiousness of a servant deprived me of this poor chance, by explaining to me in a way not to be misunderstood, the prince's meaning, and pointing out to me the glass. "Aye," said the prince, as he took it in his hand, "this will do well; it is very light, it is just the thing." I looked very blank, and at last observed, that the loss of it would totally spoil my instrument; nevertheless if the shahsazdeh required it, I would, no doubt, present it. — "Well," he replied, "keep it now, but let it be forthcoming; I will examine it further, and if it be as good as it appears, you shall have the honour of presenting me with it: I will receive it." Soon after this, I received leave to depart, and gladly returned to my lodgings.

I heard nothing more of the sick princess; and whether she recovered, or fell a victim to her complaint, I know not. I waited in vain for the chief physician, or any other messenger from the prince; and on the third day after, fearing that some jealousy on the part of these persons might have prevented a message from reaching me, I wrote to Ismael Khan, enquiring after the health of the princess, and begging to know whether any such message had been sent; at the same time again offering any medicines I possessed, or the best service I could render, if acceptable to him, and to the prince. To this letter I received no answer, and thus ended my intercourse with that part of the royal family.

On the evening of April 30th my express returned from Tehran, having performed the journey there and back again, a distance of at least 320 miles by the road, in nine days. He was the messenger of disappointment; as I learned that my friends M. Willock the charge d'affaires, and Dr. Macniel, had both left Tehran, for Tabreez, some time before the arrival of the express. It had been my hope, that the latter gentleman might have joined me at Saree, and accompanied me through the rest of Mazunderan and Gheelan; but this could not be the case now. I was also alarmed, by hearing that the baggage I had sent from Mushed, had not yet reached Tehran. These packages contained several valuable articles, and

among others, a portion of my papers and journal, the loss of which would have been serious to me, so that I had no reason upon the whole to be pleased with the event of my message to Tehran.

The object of protracting my stay at Saree having being now accomplished, I prepared for my departure to the westward ; but I had still one duty to perform, of rather a painful nature. This was to dismiss Meerza-Abdool-Rezak, the faithful, though inefficient companion of my travels. He possessed excellent talents, a good deal of enterprize, and far more integrity and sincerity, than is often found in Persians ; but his indolence and infirmness of purpose quite unfitted him for what he had undertaken, and rendered him a burthen where he should have been a support and assistance to me. Since the time of our explanation at Ashruff, it had been understood, that we were to part at Saree ; but he seemed almost to have forgotten it. His heart I fully believe was willing in the cause ; it was the weakness of his head, and his imagination, that made him desert it. I saw, however, that we could not do longer together, and resolved on immediate separation, to which he made no further objection. His behaviour at this time was liberal, to a degree, that few of his countrymen would have imitated. He knew well that I had little money left, and no means of recruiting my stock in this place ; he therefore desired me to leave him as he was, for there was no fear of his making his way wherever he pleased.—“ A Dervish,” said he, “ can “ always find friends, and the means of living ; but you are a stranger “ in a hostile land, and must not deprive yourself of what may be “ necessary to your safety.” I could not, however, consent to his going on these terms, but gave him what money I could spare, and an order on my friends for the balance due to him, when he should claim it in person. I also presented him, in spite of his remonstrances, with a horse and furniture ; the only useful thing I possessed, which I could leave him as a mark of my good will and esteem ; I might even say of my affectionate regard. We parted, and I have never seen him since.

CHAP. VI.

VISIT TO FURRAHBAD — WHERE SHAH ABBAS DIED. — ROAD. — SITUATION OF FURRAHBAD. — DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS. — FISHERY ON THE THEDJIN RIVER BY STEPHEN AN ARMENIAN. — RETURN TO SAREE. — RECEIVE A KHELUT FROM THE PRINCE. — AUDIENCE OF LEAVE. — TAKE LEAVE OF RAMZAUN BEG.

PREVIOUS to quitting this part of Mazunderan, I was desirous to visit the ruins or Furrahbad, situated at the mouth of the Thedjin river; and about seventeen miles distant from Saree. This was another of the royal residences, with which Shah Abbas embellished his dominions; and it furnished a striking proof of his partiality to Mazunderan, that he should have constructed two establishments so extensive as Ashruff and Furrahbad in the same province, and so close to each other. The last-mentioned palace possesses a peculiar interest, as being the place where that monarch closed a long and prosperous reign, A. Hej. 1037, and A. D. 1628, being seventy years of age, forty-three of which he had sat upon the throne of Persia.

On the second of May, therefore, taking with me two of my servants, and a pony, with some necessaries, I set out to view these ruins. The road lay through a country varied with forest and cultivation, chiefly rice, and very populous, for we did not travel a mile without passing through, or close by a village; and houses, in groups of two and three together, were every where thickly scattered about. For the first eight or ten miles we travelled in a line as straight as an arrow upon an excellent causeway, also constructed by Shah Abbas, and still in good order, except where crossed by watercourses, which had ploughed up, and washed away considerable gaps. Passengers were numerous, both going and coming; and most of them were

mounted. We presently left the causeway, and I suspect strayed from the direct course ; for we had to pass through several inclosed and flooded fields. The extreme natural strength and impracticability of the country appeared at every step: the thickets were matted with brambles, wild raspberries, and vines, which, twisted up with the black thorn, wild pomegranate, and other stubborn and prickly shrubs, formed an impenetrable wilderness ; the loftier forests rose from deep and impassable swamps.

Furrahbad once stood in a wide, well cultivated plain, but since the town fell into decay, a considerable portion of the cultivation has been abandoned, and it is now merely a fine meadow, intersected with the ridges and ditches which formerly divided the fields. Great part of it was covered with rich grass and clover, daisies, the first I had seen, with yellow buttercups, blue birdseyes, and a variety of wild-flowers ; but the thicket and the forest were now again invading it, and effacing the traces of man ; we could hardly get our horses along, they were so eager to get a bite of the sweet grass. Forest, every where pervaded with villages, surrounded this desolate plain ; the rice cultivation was going on rapidly ; ploughing, planting, and irrigating were seen on every hand ; the barley was already in ear, and fast filling.

Our course was a little to the east of north ; the river Thedjin was on our right all the way, and we found it running directly under the walls of the ruins, and past the village. We reached it about eleven in the forenoon, and easily procured a lodging in the place occasionally occupied by the prince, who comes sometimes here to hunt ; but having omitted to bring a direct order from him for our entertainment, we found it somewhat difficult to procure provisions even for ready money. It is strange, but true, that in Persia, a person armed with authority, and power to help himself to whatever he requires, is often better received, and fares better, than those who come with money in hand offering payment for whatever they want. The people have been so long accustomed to the tyrannical mode of proceeding, that they seem hardly to understand just and mild treatment, and possibly deem it to proceed from a weakness which they

may trample upon, or at least neglect with impunity; perhaps they may in some cases look upon the production of money as a *ruse de guerre*, which they require to guard against particularly.

The ruins of Furrabad are divided into two principal parts, one of which formerly contained the buildings suited to a royal residence. In the other are the public buildings usually attached to a respectable town. A considerable space has been inclosed for the first, by a strong wall, with bastions at the corners; and this was again divided into two parts; that to the northward containing the private, that to the southward, the public apartments. In the other, nothing now remains except a small house of three rooms, kept for the accommodation of the prince when he comes here to shoot. The entry from thence to the other division is by a long narrow passage, such as is usual in harems, and is surrounded with lofty walls, in a way that leaves no doubt of its having been appropriated to the residence of the ladies. The only building now standing, is a house nearly square, of two stories, with a high square tower at top, situated near the river side, and now called the Jehan Numah. This, though much dilapidated, still retains its original form, so that the disposition of its apartments can be made out. It much resembles some of those at Ashruff; having a large centre hall, with corner rooms, and smaller ones between them on the lower story; and above, a number of small cells, some of which are in suite. These indicate sufficiently its original destination, which the traditions of the place confirm, by calling this building, the *zenānah* or harem.

All these rooms have been adorned with painting, not in flowers and fancy ornaments alone, for, contrary to the usual customs of Mahometanism, the pannels and recesses have borne representations of the human figure*; but they had suffered so much from damp and violence, that it was difficult to trace the design. From what I could observe, however, it appeared that the subjects, or the artist at least,

* It is true that Shah Abbas and other Persian princes did use to have representations of the human figure in their apartments, but it was chiefly confined to pictures of the royal family, or of ancient heroes, or historical pieces, as in the palace at Isfahan; fancy groups and figures like these are not common in Persia.

must have been Chinese, because instead of the stiffness so constantly observed in Persian paintings, those in question possessed much of the flowing, and even graceful outline which is to be seen in the best Chinese compositions: bits of gold and azure could still be detected amongst the ruin which had laid every thing waste, and no doubt, the place was once worthy of its inmates.

To the west of this may be seen the remains of a wall and gate, once probably belonging to a garden, now, like the rest, a mass of ruins covered with briars and reeds. The situation of this building and its garden must once have been very delightful; and the view from the tower above, extending over the town and neighbouring country, as well as the Caspian Sea, both interesting and magnificent.

Passing through the outer enclosure by a gate-way to the southward, we reached another entrance, opening into a fine large oblong square. The space between the gate-ways was probably a street, or inclosed pathway, intended for those who came to wait upon the sovereign. The square is two hundred and fifty paces long by one hundred and thirty-four broad, and is surrounded by an arcade of fifteen feet wide, within which we saw a range of small apartments, in some places double, with windows opening behind. This was probably, a great bazaar like the maidan-shah at Ispahan, and contained chambers in which shop-keepers could lodge as well as expose their goods for sale. Opposite this northern gate is one which leads to the mosque. The buildings connected with this establishment inclose another oblong square, the south (or S.S.W.) side of which is the mosque itself: this fine building, which is sixty-six paces long by twenty-five deep within the walls, is supported by four rows of groined arches upon plain pillars, and has in the centre a lofty dome exceedingly well turned; which, like the rest is formed of brick and mortar. Neither it, nor the walls, have ever been plastered inside; the bricks, which have been carefully pointed with lime remain just as they were at first, but the roof of the arcades has in many places fallen in; and all the other parts of the building, except the dome of the mosque, are in a state of decay. Opposite the

mosque there is a screen as usual, having arched cells to correspond with the arches of the mosque, which, with the other surrounding apartments, served probably to accommodate the Moollahs and Khadums attached to the establishment.

On each side of the mosque, at its eastern and western extremities, were to be seen the remains of two smaller buildings, also inclosing rectangular areas. These have been divided into cells which, judging from those still remaining, fitted up with fire-places, recesses, and shelves, with a verandah before, and sleeping-places behind, have probably been intended for Medressas, or colleges attached to the mosque.

Such are all that deserve notice of the ruins of Furrabad; every part of them has been constructed with the best brick and mortar, and so completely in the manner and style of Shah Abbas, that no one who has seen the other works of that monarch would hesitate in naming him as their founder. But the whole is vastly inferior to Ashruff, in extent as well as in magnificence; the one indicates a permanent, the other a temporary residence; it is only singular that they should have been placed so near each other. Both are now in complete decay; a decay, which, independent of the total neglect of man, may be termed premature, and is to be attributed to the moist climate and rank vegetation of Mazunderān; the former destroys the external cement, and enables the seeds and roots of plants to fix themselves; that, once being done, the growth of their roots soon bursts the strongest walls asunder. The solidity of the buildings at either place, would, in the dry climate of Irāk, have ensured their premanence for many centuries.

That Furrabad was once a town of considerable extent and importance is certain; it is now, however, a petty village, with nothing to boast of but the ruins already described; for all the houses, which were constructed of wood and clay, mouldered into dust as soon as they were deserted. There is at no great distance from it, on the sea-side, a small establishment formed for the purpose of catching sturgeon, and curing them for the Russian market. It was at this time in possession of an Armenian, called Stephen, who

rents the fishing of this and two other rivers, nominally at one hundred tomauns or fifty-five pounds, nearly, a year; but he says that with *peahcush*, as presents made to a great man for the purpose of conciliating his favour are called in Persian, and other extortions, the rent amounts to triple the sum. This man has sixteen or eighteen Russian sailors along with him, who have erected a few wooden huts to serve as warehouses for the fish which they catch and cure, the salt they use, and as dwelling-places for themselves. The fish are caught by hooks suspended by small pieces of twine to stronger lines, stretched across the river: a float which sinks when a fish takes the bait, warns the fisher to put off and take him in. They are then cured by taking out the caviare or roe, and the isinglass; and are afterwards sent off to vessels which come periodically to receive them; two of these were at anchor off the bar at this time.

Stephen, the Armenian, informed me, that in a good year they get from five to six thousand fish in the three rivers; but that unless he obtains the last number, no profit is realized from the fishing: such was not the case this season, and he was going to try if the prince would give him some abatement. The fish when cured, he says, sells in Astracan at about a rupee per pood, of five tabreez mauns, or about 40lbs. English, besides which the roes and isinglass are valuable. A prodigious number of sturgeons is caught in all the principal rivers that flow into the Caspian; both from the north and south, all of which are brought to Astracan; and this occasions its low price in that city.

I enquired whether salmon or herring were ever taken here, but was informed that these fish are seldom seen so far to the east; being most numerous about Saliān and Bāko, on the western coast. They told me of another scaled fish about as large as a small salmon, as being the only other sort which they catch, and that in no great abundance. When I visited this post, and made myself known to the owner Stephen, he received me with great cordiality; and though the hut was neither very clean nor particularly sweet-smelling, it was not an unpleasant variety to be asked to sit upon a stool, and drink a cup of good tea in the European manner. Brandy and Madeira

were also offered me, but I declined these. The warehouses were guarded by a number of watch-dogs, larger and fiercer than almost any I ever saw before, and which I was informed had been brought from Astracan.

Before I quitted the place, I did not omit to visit the sea-beach, the air of which was peculiarly refreshing. The water appeared to be of considerable depth, even close into the shore, and the beach rose rapidly from the water's edge, into hillocks of sand covered with jungle. There was a bar at the river's mouth, on which the water broke, and outside of this, nearly half a mile distant, lay the two Russian vessels, rigged something between a ketch and a galliot, with a large mast forward, and a smaller one aft, each sustaining a square yard and a gaff.

On my return to Saree, I was anxious to pay my final visit to the prince, in order to receive his leave and safe-conduct, and then to proceed on my way by Balfroosh without further delay. Just before I set off for Furrabhad one of the prince's servants had brought me a khelut, or dress of honour, with a compliment from his master. I was prepared to find it extremely poor, but it quite surpassed, in this respect, my meanest expectations. It consisted as usual of a robe of cotton stuff wrought into gold thread to imitate brocade, with a shawl or cincture of the same stuff for the waist, but so wretchedly shabby and imperfect, that both Ramzaun Beg and the man who brought them, were ashamed of them. It is customary to wear any dress so presented at the audience of leave granted by the king or prince, but on putting it on, I found it looked so absurd, that I resolved not to go; and told Ramzaun Beg he might return it to the prince, or do with it what he pleased. The poor man seemed quite thunderstruck at this. Refuse a prince's khelut! — such a thing was never heard of; but I did not choose to be made a fool of, and he left me vowing vengeance on the Meerza, who he chose to believe had induced me to act thus; and swore he would denounce him to the prince.

In the evening when friend Ramzaun Beg came in, he was sulky and cross, but by the time the daily dose of opium had thoroughly

operated, his good humour returned ; and he told us that he had informed the prince of my having received the khelut with all due respect ; but had humbly represented, that I should much prefer something which when arrived in my country, I might show as the *yaudgar* or keepsake of the prince of Mazunderan, such as a sword or dagger, to a dress which I never could wear, and the worth of which could not be appreciated there : he added, that this suggestion had met the prince's approbation, and that he had promised to send me something of the kind next day.

Accordingly, on my return from Furrahbad, Ramzaun made his appearance with an air of great triumph, exclaiming, " Look what the bounty of the noble shahzadeh has bestowed upon you ; see whether I have not acted well in your behalf ! " He then displayed a khunjur or dagger of damasked steel, with an ivory handle, inlaid with jewels, which certainly at first sight had a very gay and promising appearance ; but a closer inspection proved, that like the words of its master, it was intended more for show than use ; for the jewels were false or bad, and the value, though ostentatiously estimated at forty tomauns, was in reality hardly ten. Ramzaun Beg had given to the keeper of the Toshakhaneh* who brought this present, three tomauns on my account, and took great credit to himself for having got me off for so small a gratification to so great an officer. The articles I had given the prince, would, if sent to the Bazaar, have sold for twenty tomauns, so that it becomes a matter of no trifling expence to exchange presents with a prince of Persia.

On the morning of the 4th of May, having sent forward all my baggage, I went by appointment to receive my leave from the prince, and return him thanks for his magnificent present, which, as in duty bound, I wore at my waist. As if he thought that on a former occasion he had admitted me to too much familiarity, he now seemed resolved to keep me at a sufficient distance. He was seated at a window of one of his garden-houses, into which it was intimated that I could not be admitted, because some of his favourite women were

* The Toshakhaneh is the place where all the valuables, in dress, arms, furniture, curiosities, &c. are kept.

in the garden. I was therefore forced to stand in the plain below, during the short conversation which took place. This, however, was limited to a few common-place questions respecting what I had seen of the place, and what I thought of Furrabad; but, to my horror, just before giving me leave, he enquired what I had done with the little spying-glass he had desired me to keep for him? Now, not having heard any thing more of this matter from the first day it was spoken of, I had sent it off along with the instruments among my baggage: thus taken off my guard, therefore, I felt rather confounded, and began a confused apology, when Ramzaun Beg came forward, and offered the prince a small spying-glass of a different kind, which I had presented to himself as a token of regard for his great kindness. At the time I gave him this glass, he thanked me for my goodness, but observed, that he never would be able to retain it; the *prince* or his own *wife* would be sure to worm it out of him; and when I went with him this morning to wait upon the prince, he carried the glass with him in spite of my remonstrances; saying, that what he must do one time or other, he had better do at once with a good grace.

The prince ordered the glass to be handed up for his inspection, looked at it with rather a growling aspect, and at last handed it to one of his attendants, when it went to join the mass of property he had extorted from other unhappy wretches. It had the desired effect, however, and I received my final leave.

It was more than two hours after this, before the ruckum, or order, which had been promised me by the prince, was made out and delivered to me by Ramzaun Beg. This paper declared me to be an English gentleman, friendly to Persia, a guest of the king's and his own; and ordered all within his government to supply my wants, and assist me in my progress; and though, like most of these passports, the greater part of it consisted of words of form, and the latter clause in particular might be quite valueless and ineffectual, still it was a document that might possibly be convenient on some future occasion, and I was glad to obtain it even at the expence of some delay, and another toman of outlay to the Meerza who wrote it; for papers of

this sort are not to be had in Persia without fees, any more than in other parts of the world.

At last I shook hands with old Ramzaun Beg, of whom I must in justice say, that I have found few Persians so disinterested, single-hearted, and kind. As I had been thrust upon his hospitality by the commands of a tyrannical master, he might in great measure have been excused had he treated me with coldness or neglect. But this was never the case ; on the contrary, although at first receiving me he showed in some measure that he was performing a duty, not a voluntary civility, he soon took a more friendly turn ; the natural hospitality of his disposition gained the ascendant, and he really did all in his power to make me comfortable. He aided me on every occasion with his best advice, and always without that disgusting torrent of profession and compliment so universal in Persia ; and so thoroughly disinterested was the good old man, that even when I was quitting his roof for the last time, he would not receive a single thing from me excepting a knife, and the unfortunate spying-glass.

CHAP. VII.

LEAVE SAREE. — ROAD TO BALFROOSH. — REACH THAT TOWN. — LODGINGS THERE. — ACCOUNT OF BALFROOSH. — POPULATION. — BAZARS. — CARAVANSERAYS. — MEDRESSAS, — PROVINCE OF MAZUNDERAN. — PRODUCTIONS. — INHABITANTS. — FOOD. — DISEASES. — GARDENS AROUND BALFROOSH. — BAUGH-E-SHAH. — RESERVOIRS FOR IRRIGATION. COURTEOUSNESS OF THE INHABITANTS OF BALFROOSH CONTRASTED WITH THOSE OF SAREE. — ZEIN-UL-ABUDEEN, A DERVISH COPPERSMITH — VISITS THE AUTHOR. — ANOTHER DERVISH. — HIS MYSTERIOUS CONDUCT — EXPLAINED. — HIS CHARACTER. — AUTHOR VISITS HIM AND ZEIN-UL-ABUDEEN. — CONVERSATION WITH THESE PERSONS. — STORY OF CERTAIN MOOLLAHS AND AN EUROPEAN AMBASSADOR. — PREPARE TO SET OUT FOR RESHT. — MULETEERS OF BALFROOSH.

THE town of Balfroosh lies west of Saree about thirty miles ; the road being entirely along the line of Shah Abbas's causeway, which is in tolerable condition only for about three miles from the latter place ; after which it plunges into deep forest, interspersed with rice fields, at this time under cultivation ; and the numerous watercourses for irrigating them crossed and occupied the road, cutting it so deeply as to render it almost impassable for a horse. In some places the inhabitants had laid slabs of wood and branches of trees across the worst steps, and so patched them up as to render them practicable for cattle, but this expedient only served for a few days, and when the wood becomes broken or displaced, it renders the passage more dangerous than before. The extensive traffic on this part of the road had worn the causeway so much that it had sunk in many places considerably lower than the level of the surrounding country, and thus serves for a watercourse ; so that we sometimes rode for miles in water up to the saddle-girths, not knowing whether the next step might plunge us overhead in some deep hole ; but the bottom being hard from the debris of the causeway, we found this amphibious travelling, upon

the whole, better than that portion of the journey where the road consisted of clay, in which the horses sometimes sunk to their bellies, and where it was often most difficult to extricate them. The baggage cattle had passed before, and certainly none but beasts accustomed to the swamps of Mazunderan could have succeeded in doing so. This too was after four or five days tolerably fine weather. In winter, when the sun has less power, and when snow and rain are almost incessant, these roads must be quite impassable.

About twelve miles from Balfroosh we passed through Alleabad, which Hanway takes notice of, and which is now a very miserable village. Somewhat less than four miles beyond this, we had to ford a very rapid and dangerous mountain stream, called the Ab-e-Tālar; which is so powerful at this season, that it is usual to post certain persons as guides to the ford, who with long poles to support them, assist passengers to cross, lest they should be swept away by the torrent. We had the advantage of seeing two men cross before us, yet my horse, a very powerful one, made a false step, and very nearly gave way with me. Beyond this stream, the country became more open, and with its extensive rice fields, and occasional islands of jungle, reminded me of certain parts of Bengal. There is no view of Balfroosh to be obtained; for on approaching that town, you only see a dense forest, into which you ride, and in which the habitations are scattered amongst the trees.

We found excellent quarters had been secured for us in the house of Jaffer Kōolee Khan, the brave and generous but ambitious brother of Aga Mahomed Khan, who was treacherously put to death by that monarch, as a measure of preventive policy. It was an extensive palace handsomely fitted up, and surrounded with fine gardens, all, however, in disrepair; but the prince had directed it to be put in order for the reception of his son Iskunder Meerza, and the workmen were now employed for that purpose. The room I occupied was adorned with paintings; and on the panels between the recesses and windows were placed small mirrors, fitted with ornaments like heraldic scrolls, which I think must have been of European origin.

I had no reason to complain of any deficiency of respect in my reception at this place ; on the contrary, the good seraidar or palace-keeper, who was my mehmandar, with one or two of his friends, bestowed their attentions upon me till a very late hour ; and next morning the hakim, or governor of the town, with some of the chief merchants, came to see me, and sat a considerable time. As these were men of intelligence and information, whose conversation was very instructive, I was happy to prolong their visit.

The town of Balfroosh offers to the traveller a very singular, perhaps an unique exception, to the general description of towns in Persia : and a very gratifying object, particularly to the inhabitant of a commercial country, in the spectacle of a city purely mercantile, peopled entirely with merchants, mechanics, and their dependants, and prosperous and happy far beyond any in Persia. I do not believe there is a khan or noble in the place ; even the governor is a merchant, and there is a plain and simple air of plenty, ease, and comfort, attended with a bustle and show of business in the public parts of the town, very rare, if at all to be met with elsewhere in Persia ; and reminding the traveller of the scenes he may have observed in some of the commercial towns of India.

Balfroosh, at least as it now stands, cannot, I believe, lay claim to any considerable antiquity. It is the creature of trade, and has grown by degrees, through commercial prosperity, to its present size and importance. It is difficult to say what may have been the advantages which first attracted trade to it, and gave rise to this prosperity ; for at first sight it does not appear to be greatly favoured in point of situation : on the contrary, there are many circumstances connected with it that might be supposed hostile to commercial purposes. It is situated in a low, swampy, though rich country, whose deep and almost impassable roads seem calculated to shut it up from intercourse, rather than to fit it for being, as it is, the seat of a great transit trade ; and its port is little better, as far as I could learn, than an open roadstead, situated about twelve miles distant. On the other hand, it may be contended, that the rich and extensive plain in which it is placed, affording very considerable supplies, of

those articles produced in Mazunderan, constitutes this spot a mart for these commodities; besides which, it is centrally placed with regard to Casween, Tehran, Shahrood, and the interior of Persia (being near two principal passes through the Elburz), as well as to Resht, the capital of Gheelan, also a place of very extensive trade. But whatever may have been its original attractions, there can be no doubt that one of its greatest present advantages is the freedom which it enjoys from interference or oppression by the rulers of the country. It is governed by a native, himself a merchant, who dares not, if he would, extort money by oppressive means. It is very moderately taxed *, and is not required to furnish any troops, either horse or foot. It is not surprising that this comparative immunity from imposts and oppression should induce many merchants to fix their habitations at this place. But this is too happy a state of things to last long in Persia. The riches of the place have already awakened the cupidity of Mahomed Koolee Meerza, who was at this time preparing to send his son Iskunder Meerza, as his lieutenant, to Balfroosh; a tribe of khans, meerzas, gholaums, and other officers, the minions of a court, will accompany him; the expence of his establishment must be defrayed by the town, which will consequently be subjected to heavy imposts; the present equitable and economical system of government will be exchanged for one of bribery and corruption; and the vexatious intrigues, and iniquitous exactions of a corrupt court, will take the place of order and justice. It is not improbable that under such a change, the prosperity of Balfroosh may rapidly decline.

Of the present extent and population of Balfroosh, it is hard to form any estimate. I never saw a place of which it was so difficult to acquire an idea from ocular observation. The whole town being built in and surrounded by a forest of high trees, and none of the

* The same cause which rendered it difficult to ascertain the amount of the population, also affects the accounts of the revenue paid to government by Balfroosh, it is confounded with that of the whole district, which is assessed in about 40,000 tomauns; the most probable accounts state 6000 of this sum to be raised from the shopkeepers and town residents independent of customs. There is no inconsiderable amount in addition to this, raised as saadurayt, or irregular taxes.

streets being straight, there is no one spot from whence a spectator can see to any distance. The buildings are indeed so screened and separated by foliage, that except when passing through the bazars, a stranger would never suspect that he was in the midst of a populous city. I passed some hours for several days together in walking through different muhulehs or divisions of the town, and could seldom see more than one or two houses at a time; for they are not continuous, but in clusters, much shut out from view by mud-walls and other inclosures; but the streets or roads were broad and neat, and, though chiefly unpaved, bore no marks of being deep or miry in wet weather. At this time they were perfectly dry, but free from excessive dust, or any of the litter or broken ground so constantly met with in the streets of other Persian towns. There were no ruins to be seen; the houses, comfortable, in good repair, and roofed with tiles, were inclosed by good substantial walls. Every thing, in short, conveyed the impression of its being a prosperous and well-regulated place.

One cause of the difficulty found in estimating the extent and population of Balfroosh, or in reconciling the various accounts that are given, is the impossibility of exactly determining its limits from those of the surrounding and dependent villages, with which it has become quite continuous. Its inhabitants compare the city to Ispahan for size; some pretend that it contains one hundred thousand houses, others not above twenty thousand. The most authentic account, however, is extracted from the result of an inquiry instituted by the prince's order very lately; by this, the town is said to consist of twenty muhulehs or divisions, containing in all thirty-six thousand houses, each house containing from five to fifteen souls. This at an average of eight, which here, according to the habits of the people, is probably not too high, would give nearly three hundred thousand souls.* This I should apprehend to be beyond the truth; but,

* I found, not only at Balfroosh itself, but in all other parts, that the general opinion entertained of this city was, that it is larger and more populous than Ispahan. Several inhabitants of Resht, of which it is a sort of rival, and some well-informed men at Tabreez spoke of it in the same terms, so that I do not believe I have at all overrated its size or population.

taking into consideration the appearances of the bazars, and the great reputed extent of the place, together with the above estimate, I should be disposed to believe that Balfroosh contains two hundred thousand souls. This estimate was probably taken with the intention of discovering to what extent the town might be taxed, and it is probable that under this impression the inhabitants would endeavour rather to conceal than exaggerate their numbers.

There are no public buildings of any consequence, nor is there any splendour in Balfroosh. The only places of any interest are its bazars, which are the most extensive of any I have seen, except those of Ispahan, and by far better filled : they extend for a full mile in length, and consist of substantially-built ranges of shops, covered from the sun and weather by a roofing of wood and tiles, kept in excellent repair. There are about ten principal caravanseries in Balfroosh, of which several are attached to the bazar, and are disposed in shops or chambers for the merchants, and warehouses for their goods. Among them may be noticed the caravansery called Kaiseree, the Wuzeeree, and that of Meerza Sheffeea, late grand vizier of the kingdom, who was a great benefactor of this town, as appears from several medressas, mosques, &c. which go by his name. All these shops and caravanseries are well filled with various commodities, and present a scene of bustle and business, yet of regularity, very uncommon in this country, and therefore still the more gratifying to a stranger.

I must not omit to mention, that there are between twenty and thirty medressas in Balfroosh, which is as celebrated for the number and eminence of its Moollahs, or learned men, as for that of its merchants.

The province of Mazunderan, which for the greatest part of its length is but a strip of country, contained between the mountains and the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, is perhaps broader at this point than any where else. The mountains retire about Nica : at Saree, the distance from the sea to the foot of the lower hills may be sixteen or seventeen miles, to the crest of the highest ridge from sixty to seventy. About Balfroosh it is still greater ; the direct dis-

tance between the sea and the lower hills being about thirty miles ; while full thirty miles further off, the whole range of the Elburz rises in all its grandeur, like a magnificent wall, covered with snow, in which Demawund shines conspicuous, far above the rest. The whole of this extent is said to present a succession of large and populous villages, embosomed indeed in wood, but quite surrounded also with cultivation ; the greater part of this is of rice, for which the country is best adapted ; but cotton and sugar are also very much planted.

The farmers were at this time busy transplanting their rice, as in Bengal, having raised the plants from seed : this is done from one to two months after the No-roz or vernal equinox ; and they reap it in about one hundred days after. Cotton and sugar are also planted at this time, the latter requires twelve months to ripen, as in other places ; but all the canes which I have seen, are small and poor, few being ever found thicker than a man's finger ; and the produce is of very inferior quality, being dark and moist : both these defects, in all probability, arise from want of skill in the cultivation and preparation of this valuable plant. Tobacco does not succeed in Mazunderan ; its produce is harsh and bad, and all who are fond of good smoking, import their tobacco from Sheeraz and Tubbus. Silk is not produced in any great quantity ; nor is opium much or successfully cultivated, although the poppy which produces it grows sufficiently well. The land in Mazunderan yields only one full crop in the year ; but barley is sown occasionally in spring, for horses and cattle, as a green crop : it is cut about this time, after which, they plough up the ground, and plant it with rice. These form the chief products and exports of Mazunderan, and to this productiveness of its surrounding soil, Balfroosh, no doubt, owes a considerable part of its present trade and prosperity. Of this trade, and the other exports of the province, I shall have occasion to speak further in treating of the commerce of the country at large.

The hakim told me that the lower part of the hilly region at the foot of the Elburz is very populous, though not so much so as the low country. There are no Eels or wandering tribes to be seen ; indeed, from the nature of the country, they could not exist in Ma-

zunderan ; although there are several districts peopled with Eel tribes who have become fixed. A swampy, wooded, and confined country, with little waste, and no pasture lands, could never accord with their mode of life. Perhaps this may account in some measure for the comparative infrequency of theft in Mazunderan. I was informed that such a crime is rare, and that highway robbery is unknown. When thefts do take place, they extend in general only to sheep and cattle. In this particular, Mazunderan offers a marked contrast to most other parts of Persia, particularly to Khorasan. The contrast is, in truth, that of a country in profound peace, the inhabitants of which, following their lawful occupations, think not of interfering with each other, opposed to one constantly disturbed by rebellion and disorders. The inhabitants of such a land, seeing little security for their own property, have no respect for that of their neighbours ; and endeavour to thrive by the right of the strongest. In other respects, the government does not seem better, nor the country under superior regulation. There is no provision, for instance, for the repair of roads ; no penalty for breaking them up to forward private objects. When any part becomes impassable, an order for repairing it is sent by the governor of the district to the next village, and this is obeyed at all times in the most superficial manner. All other matters of police are on a like loose and inefficient footing.

During the time I remained at Balfroosh, the gates of our lodging were crowded every day with sick people, soliciting advice and assistance, of which I had but little in my power to afford them ; as the greater part were afflicted with chronic complaints, arising from the nature of the climate. I had occasion to remark, in particular, that affections of the eyes were exceedingly prevalent. These appeared to arise from a peculiar weak state of the organ, favourable to inflammation. A semi-opake substance spreads itself over the pupil, sometimes of one eye and sometimes of both, obscuring vision more or less completely, but not remaining confined to either ; on the contrary, disappearing from the one first affected to attack the other, and so by turns ; and sometimes quitting both for a while, to

return again. I have heard that affections of the eyes in Egypt, and in other places, have been attributed to the continual and exclusive use of rice as food : Can the prevailing affections of that organ in Mazunderan proceed, in whole or in part, from the use of this aliment, which here is as exclusively the food of the lower and middle orders ? Rice and mäss, or sour milk ; sometimes rice boiled down with a little milk to a thick gelatinous substance, with mäss, and a sort of poor cheese ; butter milk, and much of an acid which is made from sour oranges, and wild pomegranates ; such, and the like, form the principal fare of most orders in Mazunderan. Those who can afford it, mix a little butter with their rice, and season it with salt, or dried fish, or meat, according to their means ; but bread is little used. They do not indeed like, and say that their stomachs cannot digest it, and that it makes them ill ; but wheat is little cultivated, and of inferior quality in Mazunderan ; so that those who eat bread, use the wheat which is imported from other provinces.

Among other complaints, two kinds of fever, both of which prevail commonly in autumn, claim attention : — The one is the common intermitten, or fever and ague ; the other an acute fever which continues fourteen or fifteen days, with much burning heat, at which time, if not relieved by a copious perspiration, the disease generally terminates in death. If perspiration can be induced, or comes on naturally, the patient is relieved and recovers. There is also another malady of a very violent nature, which, from the description, would seem to be a putrid sore throat, and is very fatal during the summer. It commences with inflammation attacking the throat, in which a tumour takes place, that either bursts and terminates in death, or is gradually absorbed, leaving the patient to recover. Rheumatisms, pains in the bones, and other complaints, the effects of a moist climate, are all very prevalent throughout the country ; though I have heard that it is more healthy in general toward the sea coast.

There are several gardens in the neighbourhood of Balfroosh ; most of them belonging to opulent merchants, and refreshing from their shade, verdure, and fruit. There was one not far from the lodging I occupied, which deserves to be particularly noticed. It was

called the Baugh-shah, or king's garden, being originally formed by Shah Abbas ; and was situated in an island, surrounded by a lake of nearly two miles in circumference. This lake, which was originally intended for a reservoir to be employed in irrigating the rice fields in the neighbourhood, has been formed by applying certain very solid artificial embankments to natural hollows in the ground ; former beds, I suspect, of the river Bawool, with which the lake communicates, and which keeps it at all times tolerably well supplied with water. The lake is of considerable depth, but the surface is so much covered with the lotus, and other water plants, as to give it, in many parts, the appearance of a green field, interspersed with pools of water. The island is of no great extent, but pleasant from its situation, and laid out as a garden, with a few orange trees, cypresses, roses, and other flowering shrubs.

It is approached by a long wooden bridge, supported on brick piers : the banks of the lake are embellished by weeping and common willows : beyond it a finely varied country stretches to the foot of the hills, among which the majestic Demawund forms a noble background to the picture.

The buildings erected by Shah Abbas having fallen to decay, Prince Mahomed Koolee Meerza has built a comfortable palace for his occasional residence : it consists of a square building inclosing a court, with a small tank of water, and containing four principal open chambers, with several of smaller dimensions. There is another similarly laid out, and enclosed by a high wall for the zenanah. On the whole it must form a very desirable residence, and would be still more delightful were it possessed of a little more shade. There are in one part of the lake some brick pillars that formerly supported a small building, where Shah Abbas is said to have retired in very hot nights, in order to enjoy the cool air of the waters.

These reservoirs for the purposes of irrigation, are common both in Mazunderan and Gheelan, and are kept up at no trifling expence. During one of the days of my stay at Balfroosh, the hakim Allee Akbar, was occupied from morning to night in person, superintending the repairs of a bund or dyke, belonging to a reservoir on the

river Bawool, which had given way from the weight of water. This river Bawool is the same which debouches at Mushed-Sir, and forms one of the fishing stations rented by the Armenian Stephen. Besides sturgeon, a great quantity of a species of mullet are here caught, which, both fresh and salted, are a favourite food of the inhabitants; these are called white fish from their silvery colour, like that of a salmon in season, and are probably the fish of which Mr. Forster speaks in his overland journey, as highly esteemed by the Russians, when cured by smoke. They are chiefly caught by a casting net.

Mahomed Hoossein Khan, erected a very handsome bridge over the river Bawool, consisting of nine arches, but only five or six of them are in general occupied by the stream, which at this time was full, and ran rapidly along a deep soil of sandy loam, beneath a rich clay. The bridge, like most of the works of the Kadgers appears to be deficient in solidity; and decay is even now commencing for want of repairs.

It was curious to remark the difference of deportment to a stranger like myself, observed by the people of two such neighbouring towns as Saree and Balfroosh: from those of the one I experienced nothing but neglect; from the other, constant attention and respect. This is probably illustrative of the difference between the narrowing and exclusive influence of an absolute court, or aristocracy, upon national character, as opposed to the liberalizing effects of commercial intercourse; so true it is, that this intercourse is the most certain and effectual agent for promoting civilization and kindly feelings among mankind.

Of the numerous visitors who came every day to see me at this place, many were doubtless prompted by interested motives. The relations of sick persons came to consult me about the condition of their friends; others, merely to gratify their curiosity; but there were few from whom something could not be learned, and there was a freedom from pride and self-sufficiency, a cordiality of address, highly refreshing after the sour, reserved, and haughty deportment I had experienced in most Persian societies into which chance had thrown me. Even the inhabitants of other places seemed here to throw off

their reserve. Seyed Shooker Oollah, a person with whom I had become acquainted at Saree, a moollah of some learning, who was sufficiently shy at that place, here visited me, and took me to his chamber in a madressa, where he introduced me to several of his moollah friends. I then learned that he was not a little tinctured with the principles of sooffeeism ; which several among his friends also leant to, and much conversation ensued on that mysterious subject. A great deal was said regarding the extraordinary and involuntary passions, which so peculiarly mark and belong to this state of mind ; and strictly was I interrogated by these philosophers as to the existence of such aspirations in the land of Franks, particularly among the mysterious brotherhood of freemasons.

One evening, two merchants who had already visited me along with the governor, came again to see me ; and assuring themselves that I must be afflicted with low spirits, from sitting at home alone, kindly insisted upon carrying me to look at a garden belonging to one of them named Hadjee Mahomed Hoossain, which he had just finished. I accompanied them with pleasure, and passed an exceedingly pleasant afternoon, my hosts being intelligent men who had travelled a great deal, and were quite disposed to be communicative. They furnished out a little repast from the produce of the garden, and shewed much hospitable anxiety to amuse and make me happy. One of their friends, however, who did not appear to have seen so much of the world, added more to my amusement than he was aware of, by his simplicity, particularly the credulity he displayed respecting the power and knowledge of Europeans. In talking of our inventions, for instance, he said he had heard that when it was required to level a mountain, or break in pieces a large rock, it was shivered by directing upon it the rays of the sun, concentrated by a great burning-glass or the reflection of a large concave mirror, and referred to me, to know whether this were not the case.

On the third or fourth day after my arrival, I received a visit from Zein-ul-Abudeen, a coppersmith by trade, in good circumstances, a Mahomedan by religious profession, and a dervish or Sooffee in principle; newly converted, and warm, like all neophytes,

in pursuit of the new light which had dawned on him. It is a principle among those who profess sooffeeism, and in general among all orders of religious mendicants, such as fakeers, calunders, and the rest, that they are bound to assist one another at all times and in all emergencies, and to consider each other as brethren; it is a sort of social combination formed by the weaker against the stronger party, found in all situations where oppression is dreaded; a sort of corporation act to defend the trade against external aggression. My old fellow-traveller Meerza Abdool Rezak, when he made up his mind to leave me, was still sincerely anxious about my safety, and wished to aid it by every means in his power. He often spoke of the liberal kindness of dervishes such as he was himself, and to some of whom he had introduced me; advising me at all times to apply to them when in distress, rather than to asses and *yaboos** of mpollahs, as he called them; and at parting he gave me an introduction to this coppersmith, of whom he had heard by repute, though not personally known to him, as a sooffee of real enthusiasm, hoping that it might be the means of assisting me in my course after he should have left me. He had done me the honour of saying in his note that I was very much of the dervish; and this, as well as the recommendation to his good offices, had moved the worthy Zein-ul-Abudeen to call upon me and offer his services. Little, however, passed between us on this occasion, beyond general assurances of regard on both sides, and offers of service upon his; and he took leave, promising to return the next day.

Next morning, while walking through the bazars, I was informed that a dervish of celebrity had taken up his quarters in a stand at a little distance, where he sold a variety of curiosities, and charms, and drew great attention from the populace. As some information or amusement is generally to be derived from such enthusiasts, I went to see him. On perceiving me at a considerable

* A yaboo is a stout small horse, or rather poney, often used like mules for carrying burthens; and the term is commonly made use of in the same way as that of "ass," "blockhead," is with us, as a contemptuous expression of abuse to presuming, ignorant, and boorish pretenders to learning.

distance, he called out in a lofty tone to me to approach his little chamber, where he was seated ; and when some of the bystanders called out to “ Make way for the Elchee,” he said, in a solemn oracular tone, and with a shake of his head, “ He is no Elchee ; he has “ given up that business for some time past ;” and added some other words in a lower voice, which I did not understand. I spoke with him for a few minutes, receiving for answers to my observations only such affectedly mysterious scraps as persons of his cast are fond of dispensing. I asked to see his curiosities, but he replied, pointedly, that he had nothing calculated for me ; and so it proved indeed, for his collection consisted but of charms, amulets, a few rings with Arabic inscriptions, beads, and the like. Still he persevered in throwing out strange indistinct hints regarding myself and my friends ; until, anxious to understand what all this meant, and certain that nothing was to be got from him, surrounded as he was by his pupils and the populace, I whispered him to come to my lodgings, and left him to return there myself.

In the course of two hours, my friend the dervish arrived, and recommenced his hints of information in a strain which I could not at all comprehend ; for I endeavoured in vain to recollect his features, or the place where I could have before seen him. At last I displayed so much impatience at his continued grimaces, that being convinced of their further inutility, he made himself known to me. He was, it appeared, a native of Shiraz, who, being a clever but a lazy fellow, had taken to a life of wandering idleness to avoid the miseries of occupation, and now lived by his wits. He had seen much of the world, had discovered that it was easy and profitable to gull it, and practised what his experience had taught him, to the extent of his ability. His extensive travels had made him not only acquainted with foreign countries and manners, but, combined with a versatility of talent, and considerable acuteness of observation, had enabled him to assume a variety of characters with perfect success. At one time he clothed himself in the cloak and huge turban of a moollah, and uttered a farrago of wise and sen-

tentious quotations ; at another he personated a merchant returning from a commercial journey, or a hajee on his return from Mecca or Kerbela to his native place ; sometimes again, as in the present instance, he put on the cap and tattered robe of a dervish, sold his wonderful charms and amulets, and, by his mysterious jargon and affected holiness, made his way at free quarters wherever he went. . . .

This person, whose name I forget, was at Tehran in the preceding month of December, while I was there, and had not only seen me frequently, but had become acquainted with many of my plans and intended movements, through his intimacy with some of the people at the residency. Thus was he enabled to play off a trick suited to his character, in astonishing the people by his knowledge of me, the source of which he carefully concealed. He pretended, I know not with what truth, to be well acquainted with Mr. Willock and Dr. Macniel, and gave me some information regarding these gentlemen, which, had I then believed it to be true (as I afterwards found it to be in substance), would not only have given me great uneasiness on their account, but would have led me to consider my own situation as very critical. He asserted that Mr. Willock and Dr. Macniel, with every Englishman either at Tehran or Tabreez, had quitted Persia under the king's displeasure ; that his majesty, for some cause or other he was unacquainted with, had sent a demand to Mr. Willock for a large sum of money, in default of which the messenger was to *bring back his head* ; that he was not aware of the progress of the negociation, but that it had ended, as already said, in all the English being sent out of the country. There is no doubt that this intelligence, even though so strangely related, and through so equivocal a channel, combined with the message which I had myself received from Tehran, did appear of a formidable complexion. I could gain no further particulars ; nor was there any one at Balfroosh from whom I could obtain either confirmation or refutation of the loose report. I could not even learn that it was current in the bazar, and I was unwilling to awaken suspicion or inquiry where all was hitherto so friendly. I therefore left the future

to itself, aware that nothing I could do would serve, under all circumstances, so well as a confident demeanour and inoffensive conduct.

My friend the dervish had now thrown aside the cant of his profession, and was beginning to be communicative, when Zein-ul-Abudeen, with some other persons, unfortunately entered, upon which he suddenly relapsed into grimace and jargon. As soon, however, as they had left us, I accompanied the dervish and the copper-smith to a garden-house of the latter, where it appeared that they both lodged, and where a conversation took place, which, if it could have been preserved, would have afforded an admirable specimen of the mummerly practised by these hypocritical teachers towards their weak deceived followers. The character of the dervish I have already hinted at ; it was his business to support his pretensions to holiness and wisdom by all possible means, and to live by the success of his imposture on those whose weakness rendered them his easy victims. Zein-ul-Abudeen was unfortunately just such a subject ; an excellent, well-disposed, but weak-minded man, who, unhappily for himself, had partly become sensible of and disgusted with the gross absurdities of his own religion, and was anxious to discover a more rational system, without possessing the powers of mind requisite for the research. Such a person is apt to puzzle and perplex himself with reflections upon his own nature, his future destiny, and other metaphysical questions of a like description, without arriving at any satisfactory result. He then seeks a guide ; of course his moollahs cannot be consulted, for they are the upholders of the very errors it is wished to abjure ; but those sages, those reservoirs of wisdom, the dervishes, these are the sources to which he must apply ; and this impression is confirmed, perhaps, by the perusal of certain mystical works of the ancient sooffees. At last a dervish of some celebrity is thrown in his way, while his mind is thus unsettled by doubts, and distracted by unsatisfactory reasonings ; the pretended sage, to attract his prey, throws out a few common-place phrases of the trade ; speaks much of the vanity of human life ; observes that every thing exists but in idea ; that God alone is real ;

the only object and end of wisdom to know him; that little is required for the use of man; why then should he hoard and save? why not rather bestow his superfluity on those holy men who are near to God? He next expresses a strong contempt for all names and ranks. If he be asked "Who he is?" he replies, "A man of clay." "Where is his home?" "The world." He falls into fits of seeming abstraction; laughs and cries without apparent cause; ever and anon darkly hinting that such raptures are symptoms of that celestial intercourse with which he is favoured, and by which he has attained that knowledge his pupil so earnestly thirsts for. Thus he continues to weave his toils, till the bewildered man abandons himself to his guidance; and, dazzled by the knowledge which he fancies has burst upon his ignorance, believes that it will lead him to truth and happiness. He of course becomes a convert to sooffeism, not knowing all the while what it means; the faith of his fathers having become despicable in his eyes, he tramples on it and all its inhibitions; he turns freethinker, and, unchecked by any rules of conduct, plunges into all sorts of excesses the more eagerly from his previous restraint.

Poor Zein-ul-Abudeen was at this time fully under this fatal influence; hailing with delight the first gleams of that fascinating light, which, as he thought, had just begun to shine upon him, through the conversation of his dervish friends. Destitute of clearness of judgment to see his danger, there was every reason to believe he would suffer deeply in mind, and most assuredly in property, before detecting the imposition. Although perfectly aware that any attempt to open his eyes to the delusion he laboured under would be vain, I sincerely pitied the man; for, in the course of conversation, many evidences appeared of uncommon goodness of heart; and it was plain he was earnestly desirous to think and to act rightly, if he could only be certain of the way so to do. He became most affectionate to me, and besought me to remove to his house, where he said I should be more at my ease than in my present lodgings, subject to the interruption of so many fools and yaboos. It was some sage observation that I happened to let fall on the general abuse of time in Persia,

which seemed first to attract his notice ; but a little while after, when in the course of certain remarks on the origin of religion, I observed that they all had a common source, — that the fire-worshipper in his fire, the Hindoo in his image, the Chinese in his Fo, and the Christian and Mahometan in their several objects of worship, addressed and adored but one and the same divine being, under different names, and with different forms, according to their peculiar conceptions and education, — upon hearing this lecture of mine, the delight of the poor coppersmith knew no bounds ; he seized my hand, and kissed it, lamented that I had been so long in the place unknown to him, entreated that I would sojourn with him but one week, that he might benefit by such conversations. When that was declared impossible, he said he hoped that I would pass at least one evening with him in the dervish style, but I had quite enough of it for the time, and departed, promising, if possible, to see him next day, which, however, my departure from Balfroosh prevented.

In the course of his sarcasms against the moollahs, his contempt for whom was great, Zein-ul-Abudeen related to us a reproof which some of the most celebrated worthies in this country had received from a European gentleman, who, as usual, was designated elchee or envoy, he did not know whether English or French. He came, it would appear, with many servants, showy equipages, and was the prince's guest. One day, when seated with the prince, who caused all his finery to be displayed before him, the elchee observed, that he had seen a great many fine rooms, and fine furniture, with an endless display of state and magnificence ; but that if he might now prefer a petition to his royal highness, it would be that he might see and converse with some of the learned men of the land. The prince consented, and invited him to meet at dinner with seven or eight moollahs of great repute, who came to the feast, to use the coppersmith's expression, "with large bellies and long beards." A poor Seyed also came, but when he wished to sit down among them, they spread their robes out on either side, so as to leave him no room, and after hustling him into a corner edged away from him, as if to avoid pollution. When dinner came the elchee eat off the same tray

as the prince ; but no one offered any thing to the poor seyed, or paid him the least attention. After dinner, in course of the conversation, the elchee begged the moollahs to inform him what things, according to their religion, were considered as particularly unclean ; they all excused themselves, saying that the Elchee Khan knew as well as they what they were. On being pressed, however, they said that they were three. "What are they?" "The hog and the dog," said they ; "And the third?" asked the elchee. But they all kept silence. "Well," said the elchee, "I will tell you what it is ; it is the *kaffer*, the unbeliever ; in short it is *me* your religion considers most unclean ; yet you have eaten with me, and your prince has honoured me by feasting me from his own dish ; and you have insulted and rejected that poor seyed, the descendant of your own prophet. I observed how you treated him when he came into the room. This is the way in which you practise your religion and observe its precepts!" For some time they were struck dumb with shame, till the prince himself at last exclaimed, "Are these, then, the wise and good of the land? Truly, truly, Elchee Khan I am ashamed of them."

I had now become very anxious to continue my journey with as little delay as possible, and determined not to halt at any place short of Resht, the capital of Gheelan, a city of considerable celebrity and trade, and a place where I might reasonably expect to hear some more distinct tidings of my English friends. After some trouble, therefore, I engaged a muleteer to conduct me the whole way to that town, a distance of rather more than two hundred miles. The price asked, of two tomauns, or about twenty-two shillings each beast, was indeed exorbitant, but the man was said to be one of the most respectable of his profession, and a perfect guide on this very difficult road : I therefore closed with him at once, and had no occasion to repent my bargain.

It appeared that the carrying trade by mules and horses between this place and Resht, is monopolized by the people of a certain village called Ameerkallah, all of whom are engaged in it. There were among them several chief muleteers, or *Jelowdars*, as they are styled,

who having each a considerable number of baggage cattle, travel in caravans, and neither allow others, nor will themselves let out a small number to any one. Thus, travellers who have goods to transport are forced to wait the movement of one of these caravans, the chiefs of which, few people choose to disoblige. Without a proper guide it would be impossible to find the way, and cross the deep and rapid rivers which lie in the path. There was something also said of a tribe called Abdool-Malekees, who are given to plunder weak parties, in spite of the exemption said to be enjoyed by Mazunderan from such pests; but probably this tale was related to induce me to wait for and accompany a caravan. The muleteer who had engaged with me, threw out no such apprehensions, and being unconnected with those of Ameerkallah, was a very desirable person to have along with us.

CHAP. VIII.

LEAVE BALFROOSH. — ROADS OF MAZUNDERAN. — REACH AMOL. — BRIDGE OVER THE HERAUZ. — TOMB OF SEYED QUWAM-U-DEEN. — OTHER TOMBS. — HILL FORT OF RUSTUMDAUR. — CITY OF AMOL. — POPULATION. — REVENUE. — POORNESS OF ITS MARKETS. — VISIT TO THE YOUNG PRINCE. — HIS CHARACTER. — CONDUCT OF MEH-MANDAR. — LEAVE AMOL. — REACH THE SEA BEACH. — ABDOL MALEKEES. — IZZUT-DEH. — ALLEEABAD. — CHARACTER OF THE SHORES OF THE CASPIAN SEA. — FISH. — OTTERS. — SEA-FOWL. — CROSS A DANGEROUS RIVER. — TOWAR. — FOREST-TREES. — ABEGERM. — ROOD-E-SIR. — REACH LAHAJAN. — ITS EXTENT. — RICE CULTIVATION. — SILK. — SUFFEEDROOD RIVER — METHOD OF CROSSING IT. — REACH RESHT. — RECEPTION THERE.

ON the 10th May 1822, we left Balfroosh, and marched to Amol, about twenty-two miles through a country more open than we had hitherto seen; the only trees left, being those in the inclosures, or such as marked the situation of villages: these islands of wood, as they may be called, in the oceans of rice fields, give the country a strong resemblance to Bengal. The fields were divided as heretofore with hedges, and the ground in general was intersected by water-courses. The hedges were made of stakes, planted in the ground, and interwoven with thorns and branches of trees, which soon becoming covered with a thicket of brambles and wild vine, formed an impenetrable fence. The water-courses were rendered passable for the most part, by bridges of brick built across the road, which in many places are the only remains of Shah Abbas's causeway. We were frequently forced, from the depth of the road, to diverge from its course, into the neighbouring fields. To a stranger the roads of Mazunderan present a singular aspect, being ribbed transversely, and as it might seem artificially, into the resemblance of a ploughed field; this is effected by the regular tread of the cattle, the feet of which, following each other in succession with equal steps, sink constantly in the same place, the space between remaining untrodden, and soon becoming too slippery

to sustain a footstep : thus, the path in all its breadth becomes a succession of ridges of solid earth and hollows of mud, corresponding to the pace of a cow, and furnishes most painful footing for a horse, particularly when required to go fast.

We entered Amol by a suburb, furnished with a considerable bazar, and which is divided from the principal part of the city by the river Herauz ; a stream now very full and rapid. Over this is a bridge of twelve arches, which was rebuilt on the foundation of an old one, by Meerza Sheffeea, whose public and charitable works are numerous in Mazunderan.* The bridge in question is not, however, amongst the most substantial of these, being so narrow as not to exceed eight feet within the parapets ; while the water runs so powerfully against the two eastern arches, that they can hardly support its force for any great length of time.

A message having been sent on in advance, to procure a lodging, we were at once conducted on our arrival to a very good house, in which I soon received a visit from one of the Meerzas of the court, to welcome me with a polite compliment on the part of the young prince Timour Meerza, whose guest it appeared I had become. This civility had its inconveniences ; for, as our table was to be provided from some part of the court establishment, the hours of which were late, it was past nine o'clock at night before we got any dinner. As we had breakfasted but slightly at Balfroosh, about six in the morning, this long fast was rather inconvenient, and shewed that if a traveller in Persia desires to be comfortable, he will always trust to his own money and servants when in a town, however convenient it may be, when in a petty village, to possess an order from the prince or the king.

May 11. I went out early to see the place, and was particularly struck with the view, which presented itself upon reaching the river

* The former bridge must have been of a different description from the present one, for Hanway calls it a *sumptuous bridge*. The tradition of which he speaks, " that every one who would not be pursued by ill fortune should *walk* over it, as *riding* over it is sure to call down disasters on the person so doing," is, I presume, lost in that country, for I saw many persons crossing it on horseback, and we received no caution to dismount, which surely would have happened, were such a superstition still entertained.

side, and looking towards the mountains. They here approach within a few miles of the town; and seen through the mists of a delicious morning, fleckered with shadows from the passing clouds, looked very beautiful.

The only object calculated to attract curiosity in Amol, is the ruins of a fine mausoleum erected by Shah Abbas, over the remains of Seyed Quwām-u-deen, better known as Meer Buzoorg, once the sovereign of Saree and Amol, who flourished about four hundred years ago.* This great descendant of the prophet was ancestor to the mother of Shah Abbas; and to that circumstance the town of Amol is indebted for this fine structure: like most other fabricks of that monarch, however, it has gone to decay; but its destruction was greatly accelerated by an earthquake, which, about fourteen years ago shook down a part of it, along with a considerable portion of the city. All that now remains, is a large square structure which was once richly adorned with lacquered tiles in the most splendid figures. Of these a great proportion have dropped off, but enough remain to show the perfect plan and richness of the original. The bones of the Meer rest in a tomb covered with a richly carved wooden case, placed in the large square apartment occupying the interior of the mausoleum. A lofty dome covers this apartment, the lower walls of which are still adorned in the same taste as the outside. Smaller chambers of various dimensions, probably appropriated to the servants of the shrine, surround this ample vault; and the whole has been built of excellent brick and mortar; but the vegetation that covers the greater part of its ruins, while it adds to

* Seyed Quwam-u-deen, intituled also "Meer Buzoorg," claimed his descent from Zein-ul-Abudeen, grandson of Allee. His great virtue and piety raised him so high in the estimation of the people of Mazunderan, that in consequence of certain revolutions which took place in that country, then an independent state, he was elevated to the supreme authority, A. Heg. 760., and founded a dynasty of Seyeds, who retained this power until the year 920. He died A. Heg. 780, A. D. 1378, and was succeeded by his son Seyed Cummāl-u-deen, who, when the great Timour, in his victorious career, approached Mazunderan, met the conqueror at Jorjan, and placed himself and his army at his disposal. By this means he preserved the lives and properties of his subjects, and in great measure the integrity of his own dominions.

its picturesque beauty, rapidly hastens its total decay. It stood in a garden, surrounded by a wall, which has totally disappeared ; but the tomb is regarded as holy, and still continues to be a place of pilgrimage.

Close to this mausoleum may be seen certain mounds denoting the site of some old buildings, which, we were told, had been part of a fort ; nothing of it can now, however, be traced. I imagine that they represent the ruins which Hanway notices, and which he describes as having been strong and regular beyond any thing he had seen in Persia. The periodical repairs of which he speaks as having taken place every two hundred years, have certainly ceased. The natives have a tradition, that this fort was built by Sultaun Hoshung, the second of the Paishdadian dynasty, and that it contains the opening of a subterraneous passage leading to the sea-beach, and sufficiently large to admit of two horsemen riding in it abreast.

There is another earthen mound about four miles distant from the city, said to be the remains of a fort of Jumsheed ; these and a few tombs resembling those at Saree, which probably inclose some of the reliques of the Seyed dynasty which ruled in Mazunderān, are the only other buildings that can attract the eye of a traveller at Amol. This city, and the circumjacent country, are however replete with interest to an enthusiast in Persian antiquities : every hill, and every point, is classic ground. Many of the scenes described in Ferdousee's heroic poem passed in this vicinity ; here are the districts of Noor and Kujoor once so celebrated for their strong fortresses ; and three short days' journey from hence, is situated the still more famous and impregnable fortress of Rustumdaur, now tenantless and waste. I regretted that I had no time to visit this extraordinary place ; it was described to me as a high hill, on the top of which there is a plain of ten or twelve fursungs, forty to fifty miles in circuit, only approachable by one path, so narrow that a single person might defend it against a host, and only fit for foot passengers. It formerly contained plenty of water, wood, and game, with a large tract of pasture land, capable of cultivation ; but it is now overrun with jungle, and of course entirely abandoned.

The city of Amol, if I may rely on the accounts obtained, consists of eight *muhulehs* or divisions, that contain between four and five thousand houses, and from thirty-five to forty thousand souls; but this number varies greatly at different seasons. At this very period many of the inhabitants were deserting the town for their *yeilaks* in the mountains; thereby depriving it for a time of many families, which return to take up their winter abodes within its walls. The residence of the prince must always occasion an increase, and his absence a decrease of population. Thus, the number of actual residents is always fluctuating, and only amounts to the number above specified, when the city is at its fullest. The bazars are extensive, and well supplied. Meat was sold at about a rupee per *Tabreez maun*, of seven pounds and a quarter English. Fowls were three or four for a rupee: of rice, the staple food, ten or twelve *mauns* were sold for the same money. *Māss* or curdled milk, both fresh and sour, with cheese badly pressed, were cheap enough. *Chillaw* and *māss*, that is plain boiled rice and sour curds is the common food of the people, some of whom season it with a little salt fish. But a slight examination is sufficient to satisfy any observer, that the traffic carried on is merely that which is required for supplying the inhabitants, and close vicinity. There are none of the symptoms of external commerce, none of the bustle of trade, no merchant-like figures moving busily about, as at Balfroosh, and none of the marks of prosperity so obvious at that place. The revenue derived from the government of Amol may amount to from twelve to fifteen thousand *tomauns* a year, or seven thousand five hundred pounds sterling. Of this amount there is not above three thousand raised from the town, the rest arises from the country and villages annexed to the district; little or none of this reaches the crown, being chiefly expended in the maintenance of the local court, the expences of government, and that of a portion of service, rendered, when required by the crown.

I think it worth mentioning here, as a proof how far the inhabitants of Mazunderān have fallen behind those of most parts of Persia in the refinements of life, that wishing to recruit my stock

of tea, I made enquiry unsuccessfully for that article, both at this place, and at Balfroosh. The only parcel to be found, was about a quarter of a pound, which was kept in a druggist's shop, and which he retailed in trifling quantities, at a price equal to about three toman's, or twenty-four rupees a pound. On asking for coffee, they were ignorant of the name. There are many parts of Persia remote from the gulf or from the great marts, where this favourite oriental beverage is to be had only in small quantities, or not at all. In Khorasān, for instance, coffee was seldom to be seen, and was only given in the house of the richest nobles; but tea was always procurable, and was offered to guests in its place; nor do I remember any place until I came to Mazunderān, where either the one or the other of these refreshments was not in occasional use, and to be purchased in the public market.

As I was desirous of getting forward on my journey, I had declined to comply with a proposal made me by the Mehmandar, of visiting prince Timour Meerza, on the plea of being unprepared for such a ceremony; but upon returning from viewing the town, I found the young prince himself had sent a message desiring to see me; so that in common politeness, I was forced to wait upon him. I found his highness seated in his dewankhaneh, handsomely dressed in a vest of green silk covered with gold flowers, and adorned with many jewels. He was an uncommonly handsome youth of about sixteen; his countenance strongly marked with the Kadjer family features; he had full black eyes sparkling under strong and regularly arched eyebrows; his nose was slightly elevated, and his cheeks were covered with a rich bloom. He bore a strong resemblance to the flattering pictures of the king's sons, that are to be seen displayed in all the palaces, or to the youthful cupbearers, represented as the favoured attendants of their master's revels in the best paintings of Persian banquet scenes.

The prince welcomed me with cordiality, enquired whence I came, and where I was going; spoke of the high degree of favour with which I had been honoured by his august father at Saree, and

hoped I should find myself comfortable in travelling through his government. All this was said with sufficient readiness and kindness ; but he had acquired the loud tone in which all the princes think themselves bound to speak on such occasions, which, struggling with the small and unformed voice of a boy, had a ludicrous effect ; while it made his tones, naturally sweet and courteous, both dissonant and harsh. It appeared, however, that a talent for conversation on indifferent subjects was not his most prominent endowment ; for after the first and obvious questions were discussed, he was at a loss how to proceed, and made some puerile remarks. I therefore became anxious to relieve him by my absence ; but this was not quite so easy a matter ; for, as etiquette prescribes that the visitor of an eastern prince shall remain until his leave shall have been pronounced, I could not move of my own accord, and a pause of some awkwardness took place. At last, seeing how much it would relieve the young man, I ventured to give a delicate hint, which at once elicited the desired words, and I retired.

It was said by every one about the court, that this young prince Timour Meerza was possessed of an excellent understanding, good dispositions, and was not without talents for governing. It was also asserted that he took a principal part in all public affairs, and transacted business himself ; examining reports, issuing orders, confirming or reversing the acts and decisions of his ministers, according to the result of his own investigation ; that he even condemned and pardoned criminals himself ; and all with great clearness of head, and strict attention to justice. It was pleasing to hear so interesting an account of a young prince, who issuing from a stock but little celebrated for such qualities had begun his public career in so promising a manner ; but it was painful to anticipate the consequences of a few years, and to think how few of the numerous branches of this now flourishing house, whether vicious or worthy, might then exist ; or that this fine young prince, more dangerous to a rival from his very virtues, might be among the first sacrifices to the ruthless and calculating ambition of his relations, in the approaching and inevitable struggle for the Persian throne.

I had a practical proof, that whatever might be the virtues of the prince, his servants shared the defects and meanness common to the attendants of most great men in Persia. On the morning after my arrival, I learned that the supply of grass and corn for my horses had been withheld, and having reason to know that money had been provided by the prince for this and every other requisite supply, I sent for the furosh *, or servant in attendance, and told him, that unless it were immediately forthcoming, I should inform the Meerza, who was my mehmandar, and who would punish the culprit severely, whoever he might be. The furosh observed, that he was not to blame, but that if I would leave the matter to him, he would very soon put the matter to rights, without having recourse to the mehmandar. Accordingly the desired supply was almost immediately sent, and upon enquiry I learnt that the furosh had gone directly to the palace to inform the prince how matters stood, and that he, falling into a passion, had sent for the mehmandar, abused him for his intended peculation, and given him a sound beating. The mehmandar, in fact, had received money for all my expences, but proposed to retain the greater part for himself, was thus forced to disgorge his spoil.

The transaction at the same time offers a practical illustration, not only of the attempts at peculation which Persian servants constantly are making, but of the manner in which Persian nobles are treated by the king and princes. The mehmandar was one of the first meerzas in the presence of the prince, a man of some consequence in the country, yet the signal of the prince in a moment subjected him, without form or trial, to the same harsh and degrading corporal punishment which would have been awarded to the lowest groom.

It is right to add, that every attention which a guest and a traveller could receive, was paid to me by this young prince. He sent me

* Furosh is a tent-pitcher, or person who sweeps the apartments; but certain servants who perform various other offices in the houses of great men, such as running messages, or going before them to make way through the crowd, are also called by this appellation; it is usual for the king or princes to send one or more of these to attend on guests.

presents of apples and other delicacies from his own table, and called for my servants to enquire whether I had every thing I wanted ; expressing his desire, that my entertainment, while within his government, might be entirely to my satisfaction.

On the 12th of May, every thing being arranged, we left Amol at six in the morning, and bent our course northwards towards the sea, which is about twelve miles distant from the town. Our road passed through a succession of thick forests ; and I believe our guide lost his way, for he led us a distance of several miles in the bed of a stream, the water of which was so dirty that our horses could not distinguish the holes interspersed throughout its channel, into which they constantly plunged up to the girths. Nevertheless, this forest was thickly peopled, small groups of houses appearing every quarter of a mile among the trees. The wood consisted of oak, sycamore, and a great many very noble alders, rivalling the others in girth and height. The sea-beach, which is narrow, is composed of sand and gravel, and bordered by hillocks of sand, overgrown with dwarf-oak, wild pomegranates, plums, black thorn, and the like. This ridge of sandy knolls appears to have been thrown up by the surf of the sea, at a period when its waters stood at a higher level than at present. Behind them lies a quantity of stagnant water, the overflow of rivers and streams, whose free course to the sea has been stopt by the bars of sand which its waves have occasioned : from this stagnant lake, which is of no great breadth, a quantity of marshy ground, chiefly covered with alder trees and sycamore, extends to a considerable distance towards the interior. Thus the sea coast of the Caspian offers to an invader the dreary prospect of a thick marshy forest, without a sign of cultivation or even of human life, or the vestige of a path by which to arrive at the inhabited country.

We continued winding for an hour amongst these hillocks of sand, and under a hot sun, until crossing a rapid and dangerous stream, we emerged upon the beach ; and taking advantage of the hard wet sand by the water's edge, we continued our way, refreshed by the breeze, and with a firmer footing than the parched hillocks had afforded. It was curious to observe the alarm of our Arab and up-

country horses at their first sight of the sea : they started, snorted, tossed their heads, and stamped with their feet ; nor could they be for a long time prevailed on to approach, far less to enter its waters, the gentle but continued motion and noise of which, kept their apprehensions alive. Indeed some of them could not be reconciled, even to walking upon the firm wet margin, though so much more pleasant than the deep dry sand further from the water.

We remained for the night at a small village not far from the beach, called Izzut-deh, where the prince's order procured us a decent lodging, and what provision we required. In this neighbourhood, the Abdool-Malckees live, a tribe descended from the Eels of *Lour*,* and who, though they have quitted their wandering life, and become fixed inhabitants of villages, have not yet quite renounced their plundering propensities. They are said to amount to between three and four thousand families, and their chief Allee Asker Khan lives at a place four or five fursungs from hence, called Sarmee Kallah. Against these marauders it was necessary to be prepared, and the ketkhodah, or chief magistrate of the village, furnished us with a guard, under whose protection we slept secure.

May 13th. Another beautiful morning; and we began our march before six, so as to enjoy it fully. There is something in the influence of a fresh and dewy morning at all times exhilarating and soothing; and I do not know that I ever experienced this influence more powerfully than during this journey on the banks of the Caspian Sea. The hot and severe journey of each day sent us, sadly jaded, to an uncomfortable lodging, often, too, after a scanty meal. The requisite observations of the heavenly bodies also frequently kept me from sleep until a late hour, so that the night often failed to restore the exhausted frame. But the morning compensated for all; issuing from our dark and dirty lairs, we felt the exhilarating influence of

* This may be *Lour*, a village or district in the hills, not far from Tehran, and may have nothing to do with *Louristan* or its tribes : but, on the other hand, as it is very common in Persia to transplant a tribe from one province to another, it is by no means improbable that these people may have been brought from that province, especially as their predatory habits assimilate them to the southern Loureecs.

the morning's breeze, and saw around us all that was beautiful in nature ; — the blue sea — the deep and magnificent forests, interspersed with fields and cottages — the mountains rising like a wall to a height of six thousand feet, in every variety of form and tint, — all weariness, either of body or mind, speedily fled before the power of such stimulants.

Our march this day led us to Alleeabad, a distance of about twenty-two miles entirely along the sea-beach. This beach consists for the most part either of sand or gravel, but sometimes beds of large round pebbles occur, which are troublesome and dangerous for the horses. Sand-hills every where rise above the shore, and beyond them the line of stagnant water, called Moordab, literally, "dead water," by the natives, and formed by the numerous rivulets that run from the interior : the mouths of these are frequently shut up by bars of shifting or quicksands, in which any beast that should attempt to pass, would inevitably be lost ; and to find the path across these, is one of the most difficult and indispensable duties of a guide. These moordabs are fringed with deep jungle, behind which are to be found the villages nearest the seaside, as if taking advantage of this natural line for a protection from seaward. As our eyes became practised, we could detect little paths here and there, plunging into the thickets and leading to these villages ; but by detours so intricate, that without a guide it would be impracticable to make them out.

This day we observed a number of nets, both hanging out to dry, and left in the water for the purpose of catching fish ; the buoys made use of to suspend them were formed of a species of gourd, called cuddoo, the same which is used for calleeoons (Persian smoking pipes) in Mazunderān. We saw a fisherman take from one of them several fish of a fine white colour, which, at the distance we were from him, looked like herring ; and many large shoals were to be seen glittering in the water, with plenty of cormorants diving and swimming among them ; sea-eagles, hawks, and gulls, were also hovering in abundance, and a number of "sea-dogs," as the natives call them, which are a species of otter, were swimming about at no great distance from the shore. One of these we found dead upon the shore ; another I shot from the beach. They were about three feet and a half long,

including a short tail, had four webbed feet, their head resembled that of an otter, and their body was covered with thick and fine brown hair. These were all new objects for us, and the interest they inspired served to lighten a hot and tiresome march.

I tasted the water of the sea at this and several other places during our journey along its banks, and found it in most instances barely brackish, and sometimes so fresh that our horses would drink it readily. This was no doubt owing to the number of large streams which flow into it from the mountains of Mazunderān and Gheclan; but I have been informed by persons who have made passages to Astrakan, that even in the parts furthest from shore the water is by no means very salt.

Allecabad, the place of our halt, was a newly-formed village, the inhabitants of which had for the most part deserted their recent quarters for their ycilāks in the mountains; so that we could get nothing to eat, and not a roof to cover us. The weather fortunately was mild and fair, so we put our horses and property into the only shed we could find, which, having but one door, admitted of being guarded, and spreading ourselves under the trees near it, we bivouacked for the night. As we had no khetkhodah to apply to for a guard against the Abdool-Malekees, we were forced to take that duty on ourselves by turns, so that we passed but an anxious and sleepless night.

May 14th. A foggy and damp morning soon cleared up to a cloudless sky and a burning sun. Our path again wound along the margin of the sea, and our scenery resembled that of yesterday. The hills had now approached so near, that the strip of land between them and the sea did not exceed three-fourths of a mile. About ten miles onward, we crossed the river Herirood; a fine copious stream, which issued from a deep cleft in the mountains, the water of which, it is said, had received the praises of Shah Abbas, as being the best in Mazunderān. This stream, by the quantity of detritus which it has brought from the mountains, has formed a point stretching far into the sea. A shallow bay extends between this and another point, about eight or nine miles distant, where another and more important stream debouches to the sea. This river, which is called the Chahloos,

takes its rise in the mountains behind Tehrān, near a place called Lour, and running through a deep glen, is augmented by numerous streams in its course ; so that it becomes at this place a violent torrent, sweeping all before it, and tinging the waves of the Caspian to a great distance. It was here that the value of experienced guides became apparent ; for without the most perfect knowledge of the bed of the torrent, any attempt at crossing it would have been followed by certain destruction : nor could any of us, without shuddering, look at the furious water, as it rushed past us to the sea. Its violence was so great that it left not a chance of escape to any who might unfortunately be carried away by its force. It was, indeed, happy for us that the river had fallen a little from the flooded state in which it had been the day before ; for it was then so powerful, that a woman on horseback, who attempted to cross, was swept away in spite of the efforts of the guides, and perished. It was interesting to see the skill and intrepidity with which our chief muleteer tried the current and the channel, in several places, before he would decide upon the proper point for passing ; then taking one of the most powerful horses in company, and assisted by one of his people with a strong pole, he *shored* himself up by help of it against the current, and step by step crossed the torrent. He then returned with equal caution, and tried the same plan successfully with one of his own loaded animals ; our anxiety was great, and we had many moments of painful suspense, during which we stood expecting to see horses and men whirled over one another, and lost in the current ; but by excellent care and skill, both horses and riders were brought safe to the other side.

Another stream occurred in the remaining five or six miles, but though a sharp torrent in its way, it seemed nothing after the serious danger we had passed ; and we reached our resting-place, No-Deh, after a march of twenty-four miles, without accident or further alarm.

The ketkhodah of this village having gone to some distance, we found an order from the prince of no use whatever. We were therefore forced to take up our quarters in a shed, and to pay a very

exorbitant price for the few and very indifferent provisions to be procured.

May 15th. A wet night was succeeded by a rainy morning, but the weather soon cleared up and the day proved intensely hot. Our road still continued near the sea, only leaving the beach a little, it wound among the hillocks beyond it, through thickets of boxwood, wild quinces, apple, pear, plum, and fig trees, intertwined with grapevines, jasmine, hawthorn, and many other fruit and flower-bearing shrubs; upon a carpet of red, white, and yellow clover, daisies, bluebells, and buttercups, springing from a rich close turf. Our pace was tedious, for the beasts went slowly on account of the heat; but the path was so pleasant as almost to beguile weariness. We crossed several considerable streams, one of which, called Nuishtah, fell into the sea, about fourteen miles distant from our last night's quarters. Our march, in all, was about twenty-two miles to Towār, a village considerably removed from the coast, to which we approached by a very deep and intricate path through a forest. Here also our ruckum, or order from the prince, was of no use; as we found no chief magistrate to whom it might be presented; so that we were forced to take up with such quarters as the first houses we met with could yield us, and to pay, as before, for all we required.

The villages in this part of Mazunderān appear to be more dispersed through the jungle than in the more eastern districts. The houses are not even placed close to each other in clusters, but scattered fortuitously about, not more than three or four being together, surrounded by fields and orchards. A muhul, or division, includes several of these small establishments; and a village frequently consists of several muhuls. Thus some villages cover several square miles of land, including in their circuit a great extent of forest and cultivation, and thence it becomes extremely difficult to ascertain the extent or population of any one in particular; even the ketkhodah, or chief himself, can hardly answer such a question. He will tell you that "It is very large, contains a great many houses:" or answers, "Oh, it is a small place, not so large as such another." Indeed, as all their ideas are relative, no

positive information could be had ; and it would be almost impossible to arrive at any correct estimate of the population or resources of Mazunderān.

During the whole of this day's march the mountains were never more than two miles distant from the beach, except when they receded into deep vallies. It is in these vallies that a large portion of the population is to be found ; indeed, the extensive tract of mountainous country contained between the foot of these hills and their crest, towards Tehrān and Casween, is, I believe, thickly peopled, but it must be so difficult of access, that even the government, I should think, can have no certain information of its resources, and still less the means of turning them effectually to account.

The village of Towār belongs to the district of Tunnacaboon, of which Korrumabād is the chief town. The government of this rich and fertile district, producing from 30 to 40,000 tomauns a-year, or from 16,000% to 22,000%, has been bestowed by Mahomed Khoollee Meerza upon his son Mahomed Caussim Meerza. The great source of this revenue is the manufacture of silk ; and this day it appeared, that we first entered the true silk-growing country, for we observed several large mulberry gardens in the village of Towār ; and my lodging was in a silk store-room, a circumstance which added nothing to its cleanliness.

I observed that the inhabitants of these villages, unwilling to lose entirely the shade of their forest trees, yet sensible that the influence of air and sun are required for maturing their crops, have adopted the expedient of pruning the greater part of their branches, leaving but a bush at the top, resembling a broom ; the larger cuttings are used for fuel, while with the smaller ones they feed their cattle in the stalls. Vines are often trained, or grow spontaneously upon these trees, covering them with their picturesque festoons, and adding another peculiar feature to the scenery of this country. When it becomes necessary to destroy a tree entirely, it is not cut down at once, but after its branches are lopped, it is barked all round to a considerable height above the ground ; and thus deprived of its nutriment, it soon dies, but remains standing until time and wea-

ther rot it by degrees. In this way they get rid of the inconvenience caused by its shade and absorption of nutriment, while the ground remains less incumbered by the upright position of its huge stem. These gigantic skeletons may be seen every where towering above the thicket, and marking the spots where cultivation is to be found ; but they often give a desolate and forlorn cast to a landscape in other respects very cheerful.

During May the 16th, our road continued along the coast, on ground quite similar to that of the day before. After six miles, march we crossed the river Mazzur, a full and strong stream, which at the mouth divides into many channels. On this river there is a fishery for sturgeon, rented, as I understand, by Russians, who have built weirs across the river, and a hut for the fishers : the fish are caught not only in these weirs, but by poke-nets and three-pronged spears. I saw no one here to give me information, but observed a dead sturgeon lying near the hut.

About three miles further on we crossed another river called the Sheer-i-rood, very dangerous from its quicksands, as I nearly experienced to my cost. The guide who preceded me had passed in safety on a crust of sand, which the last flood had laid over a deep pool of mud, and upon which there was about three feet of water. This crust, however, unable to bear my large and heavy horse, gave way beneath his feet, and he sunk so deep that the water flowed over his back. By a powerful exertion he turned short and floundered backwards, until he got his fore feet upon more solid ground, by which means he was enabled to regain the shore. Had he made one step further, both he and his master would have inevitably been swallowed up in the quicksand. It was a very good lesson of caution, which I took care in future to profit by.

Our halting-place was at a village named Ab-e-germ, or " warm water," from a hot spring in the village, about nineteen miles from our last stage. Our own lodging was a miserable hut, and no covering was to be had for our horses, although it threatened heavy rain. The mist which hung on the mountains all day prevented us from

enjoying the scenery, although they were never more than four, and often not two miles distant from us. It appeared that many of the lower hills were detached from the main range; and these occasionally coming into view, but insulated by the mist, presented us with a singular spectacle, particularly when overhung, as it were, by the crest of some loftier mountain also appearing through the cloud.

May 17. As our march was to be rather a long one, we moved early. The hills come quite close to the sea just beyond the village; and a bearing taken from this point to another in our past course, about seventy miles distant, gave a general direction to the shore of the sea of S. 62. E. About three miles further on, a small stream, which comes down from a cleft in the hills, marks, as we were informed, the boundary between Gheelān and Mazunderān. A noble spur, proceeding from a mountain topped with snow, strikes down to the beach near the debouch of that stream, ending in a fine bluff point called *Sucht-Sir*, literally, "hard head." From this point the hills again recede, opening into a deep and broad valley, along which the river Pool-e-rood runs in a full rapid torrent. These hills do not again approach the sea, as far as we could judge, for a considerable distance. We experienced much difficulty and some danger in crossing the Pool-e-rood, besides which there were two other considerable streams to pass in the day's journey. Each of these forms a point in the sea, by the quantity of detritus carried down its bed; and these points, which include small and shallow bays between them, form the only variety to the regular line of the coast. The extent of our march this day was about twenty-seven miles, to Rood-e-Sir, a considerable village, situated on the river No-rood, where we were again forced to put up with lodgings in a wretched shed used for accommodating caravans, and every description of travellers, and full of filth and vermin.

May 18. We left our miserable lodgings at an early hour, and passed through the village, which is of great extent, and neatly laid out in mulberry gardens. Two rivers empty themselves into the sea at this place, the No-rood and the Kia-rood, the latter of which passes through the middle of the place, and is crossed by a bridge,

which is of so awkward a construction, and rises to so great a height in the centre, that loaded cattle can hardly climb it. One of ours fell in the attempt, and was nearly destroyed.

About three miles further on, we passed through another large village called Zemujān, furnished with a bazar, and full of interesting peeps and vistas. The whole space between this and Rood-e-Sir is occupied by a series of mulberry gardens, interspersed with a few rice fields, orchards, and noble forest trees. Ferns of gigantic size, which are very plentifully produced by the soil, bordered the path, and grew among the underwood of every thicket. At this village there was another lazy stream, the neighbourhood of which abounds with very rich and romantic scenery. An old bridge, constructed like the last, affords passengers a most inconvenient mode of transit.

From hence our route lay through similar scenery, in the course of which we crossed the large river Shālmon, which was full of fish, till we reached the base of a small range of hills, along which the road wound for several miles. Many reservoirs had been constructed here by artificial embankments, uniting convenient points of the hills, for the purpose of retaining the water of various rivulets, to irrigate the rice fields below them. Lahajān, the town where we were to pass the night, lies in a plain at the foot of the hills, surrounded by extensive mulberry plantations, rice fields, and patches of forest. We reached it a little after two o'clock, after a hot march of twenty-two miles.

A great part of our road this day lay in the line of Shah Abbas's causeway, but almost every vestige of it had disappeared. In some places the larger stones were still to be seen, but they added to the natural difficulties of the path, by rendering a horse's footing uncertain and dangerous. In other parts the road had been carried along the beds of torrents covered with rounded pebbles and large masses of rock; and whenever the winter rains had rendered these points impassable, a temporary and pernicious species of repair had been given, with slabs of wood and branches of trees. The road was in consequence particularly bad among the reservoirs, for it some-

times led us along narrow ridges, on either side of which lay deep pieces of water, and where our unhappy beasts sunk at every step so deep in the clay, that we were often alarmed lest we should never be able to extricate them again. In some places narrow causeways had been made ; but these, though they provided for the security of the embankment, were so rough and ill constructed as rather to increase the difficulties of laden cattle. The best parts of the path were those where the gravel and sand used in the ancient causeway still remained, but where the large and displaced stones had been quite removed ; it then resembled a good European road, and we travelled on with ease. Tall sycamores, walnuts, and elms, often bordered our path, sheltering us on either hand with their boughs from the intense heat of the sun, and forming a pleasant screen. Thickets of hawthorn, wild-fig, and boxwood, composed the under-wood of the forest ; and the latter grew so thick and close by the side of the road, as often to form a perfect hedge, which was reduced into form, by the constant passage of cattle, almost as if regularly clipped. Ferns of majestic growth, with blue hyacinths, yellow lupins, and other wild flowers, formed a rich carpet to the numerous little retired glades and dells that opened on every side into the forest.

This day was so oppressively hot, that it exhausted not only the laden cattle, but their conductors ; and all parties were glad to repose themselves frequently in the shade of the trees, while the poor horses cropped a mouthful of the rich pasture which every where abounded. These halts made us acquainted with several very picturesque and beautifully-situated imaumzadehs, resembling those near Sarcee, each of them embosomed in wood, and surrounded by spots of green sward, dotted with grey tombs. Had time permitted, they would have formed good subjects for a sketch ; but, jaded as we all were, we thought only of reaching our journey's end, and resumed our way, after a few minutes' indulgence in the shade.

As I was desirous of avoiding visitors at Lahajān, I took up my quarters in a caravansery ; but the deputy-governor of the place, having heard of my arrival, came with several of the merchants to

pay their respects, and wakened me out of a sound sleep, the natural effect of a restless night and fatiguing march. After their visit, as I could not again compose myself to sleep, I went through the town to see the bazars, and judge of its extent and importance.

Lahajān is a town of no small antiquity, and once of considerable extent; it now contains about fifteen thousand souls; and to judge from what I saw, I should not think this estimate overrated. The bazars are nearly as extensive as those of Amol; they were well stocked with goods, the shops were comfortable, and a good deal of arrangement appeared to prevail. The staple commodity is silk, of which much is made in the town, and in all the villages round about it; from hence it finds its way, either to Resht, and Enzellee, for exportation, or is sent direct to Ispahan, for home manufacture.

There are here three or four good caravansaries, the bustle in which proclaims a brisk trade; one medressa or college, and no other building of any interest. The post of governor is hereditary in a family of the place, but the present hakem was at Tehrān in attendance upon the king.

I had occasion for some time past, and during this day in particular, to learn many particulars regarding the method of raising rice in this country, and it may not be uninteresting to give a short account of this branch of agriculture.

After the ground is sufficiently pulverized by repeated ploughings, the number of which is regulated by the nature of the soil, water is turned into the field, and, when thoroughly soaked, it undergoes another ploughing, during which stage of the operation the ground is so soft that the cattle go up to their bellies in the soil. After this, a wooden instrument, forming the segment of a circle, is drawn over the surface, with its straight edge resting on the ground; this serves not only to smooth it, but to break any clods, or pick up whatever grass and weeds may have accidentally been left. The women then take the rice plants, which have been raised from the seed in separate beds, and beginning at one end, plant them in rows five or six inches apart each way; and this they do with wonderful

quickness and dexterity, retreating backwards, and smoothing at the same time, with their hands, all irregularities on the surface that may either have been left by former operations or caused by their own feet ; so that when they have done, the field appears perfectly smooth, covered with a sheet of muddy water, above which the rows of green plants can just be seen, tinging it slightly of their own colour. A few days afterwards, when the water becomes clear, it looks like a green mirror, and has a very beautiful appearance. When weeds spring up, which occurs soon after planting, the women are again sent over the field to gather them ; which, having performed, they again smooth the surface with equal rapidity as before, and the rice is then left to its natural rapid growth.

The large fields, for the greater facility of irrigation, are divided into small compartments, either square, or in a succession of terraces following each other, something in the form of fish-scales ; a method generally adopted when the field lies upon a slightly inclined plane, in which case, each division being itself level, sinks lower in succession than the one above, from the one end to the other, and is irrigated in a similar manner ; the water, after having flooded the upper one, passing to the next by a small opening at the lower end. Looking from a height over the country, these green and regular mirrors, glancing on all sides amongst the forest, have a pleasing effect. This forest is not an uncultivated waste ; the greater part of it consists of mulberry gardens and fruit trees. At this time the silk worms were feeding, and every one was busy attending to these insects, the source of riches to Gheelān and its inhabitants.

The price of silk at this time was low, as I understood, and had been so for some years. It appears, that Khosroo Khan, the late governor of Gheelān, monopolized the silk, obliging the ryots or husbandmen to bring all their produce to him ; this, though it did not benefit them, raised the price to the foreign merchant. Since Mahomed Reza Meerza, the present governor, came to Resht, this monopoly has ceased ; and the price of silk as purchased from the

ryots, fell to six and eight* tomauns per maun Shahee; foreign merchants pay from sixty-five to one hundred† reals per maun, but the Russians seldom get it under the latter price. Out of this the ryot has to pay the king's duty, which amounts to two rupees per maun Shahee.‡

Wheat is little cultivated, either in Gheelān or Mazunderān, and is of bad quality. The greater part of the flour made use of is imported from Astracan, and appears to be excellent. Barley is chiefly sown to be given as green food to cattle in spring. The only corn used as dry food for horses and mules is unhusked rice.

May 19th. This being our last day's journey for a while, we started early, desiring to reach Resht in good time. The first part of our road led through thickets of wild pomegranates and fern, full of pheasants, which, however, it was very difficult to raise or get a shot at. Beyond this, we passed for nearly twelve miles, through a succession of mulberry plantations, to the banks of the Suffeedrood. Many of these have been formed by planting the mulberry bushes among the natural forest trees, merely lopping off their branches, to give air and sun to the plants; this may answer the purpose, but it looks slovenly and disorderly in comparison with a well cultivated and carefully tended plantation.

The Suffeedrood is the same river which, in the country above the mountains, is known as the Kizzil-ozun, and which, bursting through that barrier by a deep and dangerous pass, traverses Gheelān with a furious and destructive current, and enters the Caspian a few miles east of Enzellee. At this point, when collected into one channel, its breadth is about two hundred yards, but it was very deep and turbid, boiling violently from shore to shore, and hurrying along with it trees, rocks, and stones in great quantities. In most places it was not satisfied with one channel, but occupying a much greater space, it tore up the banks, formed islands and beds of gravel, that appeared to be continually shifting; and often split into two or three

* From 3*l.* 2*s.* to 4*l.* 5*s.* for 14½ lbs. English.

† From 4*l.* 7*s.* to 6*l.* 13*s.* for 14½ lbs. English.

‡ A maun Shahee is equal to two mauns Tabreez, or to 14½ lbs. English.

different streams, which would again unite, and again separate, according to the obstacles opposed to their waters.

To render this formidable river passable for travellers, there was no regular ferry, no establishment of men or boats under the control and supervision of government. A rude flat-bottomed vessel, in the shape of a punt, coarsely and very slightly put together of common green timber, and large enough to hold five or six horses and their riders, was all that the commerce of Gheelān and Mazunderān, and the travellers from both countries, had to trust to, for crossing one of the most dangerous streams we had yet seen. This rude machine was built by the governor of a petty town situated on its banks, and was entirely his private property, navigated by his people, and for his own emolument ; but though the number of passengers must constantly be great, and the profit consequently considerable, he has never taken the trouble of procuring men qualified to conduct even this miserable craft. It was now managed by three or four men taken from their village occupations, who hardly knew how to use the clumsy pieces of timber which served for oars.

When we reached the river side, we learned that this precious boat was at a point further down, and we had to proceed in search of it for two miles along the banks, and through the intricacies of mulberry gardens, intersected by canals of irrigation. When at last we saw her, she was upon the other side, dragged along the bank against the stream by four or five men, who endeavoured to reach a point where they might cross with the least loss of ground. They had made several trips in the course of the day, having started at first from their post at the village : but unable to regain any of the ground they had lost on each occasion of crossing, they had by this time been drifted far down, and there seemed every reason to believe they would soon be driven to the sea. This apparatus offered but wretched hopes of relieving us from our embarrassment, the more so as there were many other passengers who had arrived before us, and who were clamorous for their turn ; and we had, thus the additional mortification of seeing the boat cross and re-cross without any benefit to our party. I must own that it was not without extreme

anxiety I beheld the frail and most awkward machine to which it was necessary to trust our lives and property ; but there was no help for it, and the sooner it was over the better.

At last, after having witnessed the provoking inactivity and needless delays of our awkward ferrymen for three weary hours, our turn came, and I embarked with part of my horses and baggage. I cannot but confess that I little expected to bring them all safe to shore. The horses had never seen a boat before, and it was not till after much exertion had been used that we got them to enter ; it was therefore hardly to be hoped they would remain quiet on the passage ; fortunately, however, they did so ; we covered their eyes, so that they saw not the whirl of the waters, and I had the comfort to land them safe on the opposite shore. The baggage-cattle, better used to the passage, were shipped and landed with comparative ease.

During the time we were detained on the banks of the river our attention was disagreeably attracted by a most sickening stench, which we found to proceed from a prodigious quantity of dead and putrid fish of very large size, covering the shores, and lying equally thick upon the islands, formed in the bed of the river. They were a species of sturgeon, and at first I was inclined to believe they had been thrown ashore by some great flood ; but more minute inspection showed that each had been cut open by a sharp instrument, which led me to suppose that they had been caught and opened for some part of their intestines, and then thrown aside as useless. This I afterwards found was the case. The Russians rent the river, and catch in it a great quantity of sturgeon ; part they salt for the Astracan market ; but from part, they only take the roe or caviare, and the isinglass which lies attached to the back part of the stomach ; the rest of the fish they reject and leave to rot. I could never ascertain the true reason of this : perhaps the fish which yields roe is out of season for curing ; perhaps it may be of a different species from that which they cure in other places and send to Astracan.

Leaving the river, we were forced to work a devious course through a jungle of mulberry trees, to regain the high road, which itself was execrable ; we had also to ride for miles through water up

to the horses' bellies, sometimes plunging into hidden holes, or sticking fast in the tenacious clay ; at other times we were required to cross a series of fields, to avoid a step of the road which had become impassable. All around us were gardens and flooded rice-grounds, through which we made but slow progress, nearly up to the entrance of Resht ; which city we reached about seven o'clock in the evening, after a toilsome march of twenty-eight miles.

Immediately after crossing the Suffeedrood, I had taken the usual precaution of sending forward a messenger to procure a lodging for the party. This person, in announcing my approach, had used the appellation Elchee, given me by the natives throughout our journey. I have before observed, that, unaccustomed to see any Europeans except those attached to diplomatic missions, travelling through parts of the country out of the common track, they conceived that I also must be in some such capacity, and always gave me the title of elchee, which signifies envoy or ambassador. This gratified the vanity of my servants, and sometimes procured me more than ordinary attention ; at others, on the contrary, it was attended with unpleasant effects, as will be seen in the sequel, and its consequences on the present occasion were sufficiently distressing.

We were met at the entry of the town by my servant, attended by a guide, who showed us the way to our lodging. It was a large house, in a comfortable room in which I was soon settled, as I hoped, for the night ; and the darogha of the city, with two or three other persons, came to visit and welcome me, saying at the same time that dinner would be provided and sent for myself and the servants without delay. After waiting, however, for nearly two hours, I was awakened out of a sound sleep into which I had fallen, by the return of the darogha, who came to say that a mistake had occurred with regard to the lodging, and that another of a more convenient description had been made ready, into which he requested me to remove. Wearied as we were with our fatiguing march, it was by no means pleasant to repack our things which had been disposed of for the night, and to rouse ourselves up in order to change our comfortable birth at so late an hour ; and I remonstrated

pretty sharply with the darogha on this extraordinary conduct to a guest. He assured me with great earnestness that no disrespect was intended, that I was the prince's guest, who wished to honour and render me comfortable. He swore by the head of the shahzadeh, and by his own head, that this was truth; but entreated me now to follow the orders he had received. I saw that the matter had been determined upon, that further remonstrance was useless, and therefore grumbled, rose, and followed the darogha.

Our new lodging proved to be at no great distance; but as far as a momentary glance could indicate, it was decidedly inferior to the first, in size, style, and comfort; and I had again to undergo the ceremony of visits, from the relatives, as I was informed, of my mehmandar. They continued till eleven o'clock, when they partook of a miserable dinner provided for me, and then at last left me to repose.

CHAP. IX.

CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE AUTHOR'S RECEPTION AT RESHT. — REASONS EXPLAINED. — LODGED WITH HADJEE MEER ISMAEL. — INTERVIEW WITH THE HADJEE. — UNEXPECTED VISIT. — MEERZA REZA. — HIS ACCOUNT OF THE COURT AND THE PRINCES OF RESHT. — AUTHOR VISITS THE YOUNGER PRINCE. — HIS APPEARANCE AND Demeanor. — BAZAR OF RESHT. — ACCOUNTS OF THE ELDER PRINCE. — ANECDOTES OF BOTH BROTHERS.

MAY 20th. After a very comfortable and needful purification at the bath, and a late breakfast, I received the visits of some others of my host's family; and by degrees extracted from them the reason of last night's mistake. It appeared, that the prince on hearing of the approach of an "*Elchee Feringhee*," or European ambassador, had given orders to one Hadjee Reza, a person of consequence in the place, to receive him into his house, and act as mehmandar on the royal part. The hadjee, however, being a proud and very devout character, by no means approved of having his house made the mehman-khaneh of unclean and unbelieving foreigners; therefore, upon my arrival, he took the liberty of quitting his house and the town, instead of receiving me, and doing the honours in person, as in duty bound. Thus, when Cossim Khan, the darogha, to whose care the whole matter had been committed by the prince, saw that no arrangement had been made for my reception, and that the master of the house had thus deserted his duty, he went immediately and provided me the lodging I now occupied, in the house of one Hadjee Meer Ismael, another worthy of Resht, on whose obedience he could better rely; and sent to summon the hadjee from one of his villages in the country, where he resided, informing him at the same time of the honour that awaited him. The prince, hearing of Hadjee Reza's con-

duct, imposed on him a fine of one hundred tomauns, as a punishment for the disrespect he had shown to the royal orders.

A variety of visitors now appeared, many of them more or less connected with the family of my mehmandar; all of whom seemed resolved to make up for the inattention I had suffered from their townsman, or more probably to give the prince no plea for fining them upon the same score as Hadjee Reza. One of these, a scyed, who it was easy to see had a huge opinion of his own wit and learning, commenced with me a discussion upon the usual topics of religion and astronomy, in a tone resembling that of my Astrabad friend; but although I at first believed from some of his expressions that he was a person of liberal ideas on these subjects, I soon found out my mistake, and discovered him to be a rank and ignorant bigot.

Towards evening two of my host's sons, intending to do me a kindness, carried me out to see a walk by the river side greatly resorted to by the town's-people, a pleasant spot which I afterwards became too well acquainted with; but we were soon summoned home to meet with their father, who, having returned from his country seat, was waiting to pay his respects, and bid me welcome.

We found the hadjee seated in my lodging, where, rather contrary to etiquette, he occupied the highest seat at the window. He was a tall elderly person, with high features, a large black beard, and grave aspect, very great and proud-looking, or what the Persians call "mootshukhus." He was reserved, indeed, barely civil, deigning to hold but little conversation with his guest. I was most happy when the hour of evening prayers relieved me from his presence, and still more so to hear that I was to dine alone, undisturbed by any troublesome visitors.

The Gheelānees are fully as rigid and narrow-minded bigots as the inhabitants of Mazunderān, whom they much resemble, but rather surpass, in ignorance, intolerance, and pride. Every second person you meet is a hadjee, as every one who has made the haj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is called, and thinks himself superior in sanctity and importance to all the world besides. Khans are rare at

Resht, being only to be met with in the purlieus of the court ; and these hadjees, who are rich landholders in the province, stand in place of the nobles found in other parts of Persia. My host was one of the most proud and haughty of these important personages ; who would as soon have eat with a dog as have admitted a kaffer such as myself, of whatever rank, to share his house or his meals, although he was too well aware of the prince's power and the will he had to exercise it, to incur his anger by refusing his behests. It may, however, be conjectured with how bad a grace the hadjee exercised his hospitality towards me, and how little comfort I had reason to expect under his roof.

May 21st. While I was preparing this morning to go through the bazars, a visitor was announced, and a young man, handsomely dressed in a rich scarlet barounee or robe, entered the room, and uttering the usual " salaam aleicoum," came up with rather an easy air, and took a seat beside me. The surprise which this familiarity occasioned, was increased by the nature of his observations, and the enquiries relative to my country, and objects in travelling, which he very speedily began to make ; and I was preparing to check what I conceived was his growing impertinence, when, to my utter astonishment, he changed his tone and language, addressing me very respectfully in good English. I at first believed, from his pronunciation and accent, that he might be an Italian or a Frenchman, but he soon undeceived me, by announcing that his name was Meerza Mahomed Reza, that he was one of those young men who had been sent to England by Abbas Meerza, to acquire a knowledge of arts and sciences, the department of military engineering having fallen to his share ; that he was about two years returned from thence, and had been lately sent by Abbas Meerza to Gheelān, at the desire of his brother Mahomed Reza Meerza, who proposed to erect fortifications in some parts of his government, and had required his opinion respecting the local capabilities. My visitor had now become a very interesting personage, and there was no want of topics for conversation. He was acquainted with both our countries, and qualified to speak of and compare them together. The English language, so long a

stranger to my ear, sounded most agreeably, even from a Persian mouth ; and I felt, in meeting with one who could utter his thoughts in that tongue, as if I had found a friend.

The conversation which now took place, was long and interesting ; he was eager to tell me all that had happened to him in England, with his opinion of the nation and country, and he was not unwilling to contrast it with his own. I, on the other hand, was anxious to know something of the court and government which I had come to see, and, above all, to learn news from Tabreez, and of my friends who had quitted Tehran. On the latter subject, the meerza could give me no satisfaction ; he knew the English gentlemen who resided at Tabreez, and was perfectly acquainted with Mr. Willock and his brother ; but he had heard nothing of late regarding either them or their friends, and did not know whether the report of Mr. Willock's quitting Tehran were true or not. Even this absence of information gave some relief to my anxiety ; for it was likely enough, that the meerza's correspondents should have no inducement to write particularly respecting the English residents at Tabreez ; but had so important an occurrence taken place as the banishment of the English charge d'affaires from the court of Tehran, it was very unlikely that it should have remained unknown, even in Resht. I therefore still hoped for the best, and anticipated the pleasure of rejoining my friends in little more than a fortnight.

With regard to the prince of Resht, and the nature of his government, Meerza Mahomed Reeza gave me no very agreeable report. It appeared that there were two princes, brothers, residing here, the eldest of whom, about thirty years of age, named Mahomed Reza Meerza, was governor of the province, and the youngest, Alee Reza Meerza, a youth about sixteen, acted as his naib or deputy. Both of these princes were remarkable for their pride and greediness ; and the meerza warned me strongly to be on my guard against them, adding that I would soon find how cordially they were detested throughout all Gheelān. It seems, that the late governor, Khosroo Khan, a man of talent and ability, had, in the exercise of his authority, constantly extended his protection to the ryots and

traders, but had done all in his power to curb the licence of the nobles and great landholders, who were ever disposed to oppress the husbandmen and lower orders. The latter, in consequence, were attached to their governor, whose charity and benevolence were always exerted in their favour ; but the nobles, on the contrary, considered him as proud and overbearing, and were so enraged at his interference with their supposed privileges, that they at last made formal complaints of his conduct to the king, and solicited his recall. His majesty, probably not sorry at having so good an opportunity to provide for two of his sons, removed Khosroo Khan, and sent these two princes, along with their mother, to Gheelān. The result resembled that recorded in the fable of the discontented frogs. The Gheelānees, too proud and haughty themselves to endure these qualities in others, had become disgusted with the overbearing arrogance of their new governors, and so much alarmed at their rapacity, that fresh and very urgent appeals had been made on the subject to the throne. Prince Mahomed Reza Meerza had been summoned to court at Tehran, in great measure for the purpose of replying to these.

The conduct of these princes and their retinue towards himself, while it might in some measure account for the degree of acrimony with which he spoke of them, sufficiently proved their individual rapacity, and illustrated the manners of their court. He had come from Tabreez a guest, at the desire of the elder prince, and, in the contemplation of a prolonged residence had brought along with him much of his property, particularly English instruments, arms, and various manufactures ; of these he assured me that hardly a vestige remained, the princes or their servants having, by one means or another, dispossessed him of them. He had brought two pair of pistols with him, one of which had four barrels, and which, taught by experience, he kept locked up in a box ; but one of the prince's gholams, having one day with easy impudence forced his way into the meerza's room, saw the box, and would not let the owner rest until he opened it. " Oh ! what capital things are these ! " said he ; " the prince must positively see them : " and, seizing hold of them, in

spite of all remonstrance, he ran out of the room with the pistols in his hand, and carried them straight to the palace. The owner followed, but too late to save his property, for they were already in the prince's hands, who, looking at them with a delighted air, exclaimed, "Hah! Meerza, these are good articles, quite fit for me; you shall present them to the shahzadeh, shall you not?" The poor meerza, too much in the prince's power to refuse, was forced to agree that they were peshcush-e-shahzadeh, "a present for the prince," and bid adieu for ever to his favourite pistols. Meanwhile, one of the royal attendants got wind of the other pair, and signified a desire to possess them, which the meerza was long unwilling to agree to; but the man continued unwearied in his solicitations, and hinted his power to injure the meerza with his master, a threat which the poor man well knew might be put in force; so at last he was forced to comply with his demand, and resign his remaining pistols.

In the same manner, one of the prince's peishkidmuts, observing him one day in possession of a very good hunting-watch, took occasion to tell him that he was about to attend the prince upon a journey, which he could not possibly do unprovided with a watch; he therefore begged the meerza to *lend* him that which he had seen. This again was a request which it would have been dangerous to refuse. The watch was lent, and never returned. On another occasion, one of the khans of the court coming into his room, observing a thermometer hanging up, inquired its use; and on being informed of it, took it down, considered it long, and at last inquired, "And can you write these letters and figures in Persian, so that I may be able to understand them?" "Yes, surely," replied the meerza, "but why should I do so? You do not require to know them, and I do so sufficiently." "Oh!" rejoined the khan, "but you must give it to me; you have made me no present yet; and this is so pretty a thing to hang up in a room, I must have it in deed." By such means, he assured me, he had been plundered of nearly all his property—watches, fire-arms, instruments, even shawls and clothes; so that, instead of being a gainer by the ser-

vice on which he has been sent, he is likely to go back a beggar. He therefore warned me again and again not to display any valuable articles, for that the young prince, who was by far the worst of the two, was now particularly hungry, being desirous to make hay while the sun shone, and gather as much as he might be able in the absence of his brother.

We had conversed thus together for some time, and were preparing to proceed towards the bazars, when one of the prince's messengers entered, and announced, that, as his royal highness desired to see me, I must go to the palace without delay. It is customary on such occasions to give previous intimation of the prince's pleasure, so that the person whose attendance is expected may be in readiness at the proper time; but nothing of the kind had in this instance been done: indeed, the present summons was contrary to an understanding between my friend the darogha and myself, and it therefore took me unprepared. From the account I had just heard of the prince's character, I entertained but little hopes of a pleasant audience. A refusal, however, was impossible; and therefore, having soon put on my court dress, I repaired to the palace, attended by my new acquaintance Meerza Mahomed Reza.

On reaching the gate, my first step was to send for Cossim Khan, the darogha, to whom I stated, that, before I went into the prince's presence, it was necessary to stipulate that a seat should be allowed me, as it had been on all similar occasions during my travels in Persia, and that, without this assurance, I should certainly not present myself. It was evident from the demur and delay caused by this declaration, that it was unexpected, and that no seat had been intended for me. The dewan beggie, or lord in waiting, therefore, retired to represent the case to the prince and his ministers, and in the mean time I took the opportunity of visiting a nobleman, maternal uncle of the princes, who had desired to see me. This gentleman, who is an Armenian by birth, was a gholaum in the service of Hedayut Khan, the former ruler of Gheelān, in whose household his sister was a slave girl. When that chief was forced to yield to the superior fortune of Aga Mahomed Khan, and fled from Enzelee to sea, the

girl became a captive, and passed into the harem of the present king, who raised her to the honour of his bed and hand, as is his custom with every female whom he honours with his regard, and to whom she bore the two princes now ruling in Gheelān. The brother followed his master's fortune, and, after his death, fled to Astracan, where he remained until his sister had borne the first of these princes. The king then sent for him, and he came accordingly, but returned after seeing his sister. It was only now that he had again returned from Russia, in consequence of the king's solicitations and promises to give him lucrative employment, which he was at this time daily expecting. From this gentleman I experienced a very polite and even cordial reception, and remained with him until the knotty points connected with my reception should be settled, and that the prince should be ready to receive me.

It was decided that the audience was to take place in private, and in a sort of garden-house called the Koolla Feringhee, literally, "*the Frank's hat*," a name frequently given to small octagonal buildings; but I was not aware at the time of the reasons for this selection. There was much parade and affectation of state, though nothing could be conceived more paltry than the whole proceeding, which was worthy, however, of the place in which it was conducted. The garden in which this Koolla Feringhee was situated had been lately planted, and was still filled with heaps of rubbish. In order to arrive at it, we were obliged to pass through tracts of broken ground, over piles of bricks and clay, among pools of dirty stagnant water, to squeeze past dead walls, and to scramble over bridges of a single rotten plank. When we reached the gate, we were forced to wait some time, as the prince, it was said, had not yet seated himself in state; and, when at last admitted, instead of proceeding straight up to the building, we were directed to parade round the further part of the garden, that we might have space to make the full number of obeisances at the proper distances. The prince's reason for choosing this place now became apparent, as we found him seated on a sort of elevated couch on one side of the upper apartment, raised considerably above all the other seats, so that, though he had agreed to

grant one to me, it must of necessity be much lower than that occupied by himself, which could not have been the case, had we both been seated in the usual manner of the country, on the ground. It was at best a shabby kind of distinction for a prince to contend for, and not in truth equal to what he might have gained, and which, even if inclined, I could not have disputed, by giving me a low seat in his own dewankhaneh.

We ascended by an awkward winding stair-case, and found two persons only in the presence, the other attendants having remained below. There were five or six chairs in the room, besides the couch on which the prince was seated. On entering, I made a bow, and, walking up the apartment, looked at the attendants, in expectation of their showing me a seat; but, as they only pointed to the bottom of the room as the place where I should stand, I was going to seat myself in one of the chairs next me, when Meerza Reza, who had accompanied me, kindly placed one for me himself, just opposite to the prince's couch, and I instantly sat down.

The accounts I had heard of this young man, induced me to regard him with particular attention; and, certainly, if any judgment were to be formed from external appearances, nothing favorable either to his head or his heart was to be augured from his person or his deportment. His stature appeared to be short, and his figure thick set, and ungraceful; his countenance naturally dark, and now rendered more so by the shade of an incipient beard, was as expressive of insolence and uncontrolled passions as features so young would admit of. Far from possessing the beauty of his family, it was difficult in his bold and ill-favoured countenance to trace any of the Kadjer lineaments. As he sat upon his elevated couch he seemed to be practising a series of studied and lofty attitudes; puffing out his chest, holding his arms akimbo, or tossing them importantly about, while, with his cap boldly cocked on one side, in the most approved style of the bullies of his country, and his face turned disdainfully upwards, he seemed inclined to bid defiance to the world; I never saw a more complete picture of selfish arrogance than appeared in the person of this young prince; nor could I view

him from the first without a strong feeling of mixed dislike and contempt.

He addressed me in the customary form of salutation, but in a voice so harsh and loud that it seemed intended to awe me into annihilation. The usual questions being asked and answered, he addressed little to me; but continued speaking in Turkish to the attendants, and making, as I afterwards learnt, a number of idle observations regarding me, in a language which he knew I did not understand. As I did not conceive myself bound to remain thus evidently his butt, I made a signal to the meerza, who said something to the prince, which was followed by a haughty nod of assent; after which, in the same lofty tone of voice, he pronounced the word, "moorrukhus*!" literally, "leave," or, "be off,"—nor did one civil observation or compliment of any sort pass his lips during the whole interview. I rose and retired, thoroughly disgusted, and determined, if it should be possible to avoid it, never to repeat such a visit.

The building in which this uncivil prince received me consisted of two stories, each containing but one room, the lower of which was without furniture, but carpeted with a coarse sort of English broad-cloth. The upper one was fitted up in a style intended to resemble that of an English summer house; it was carpeted like the lower room, and in the centre was placed an octagonal table, of rude construction, to correspond with the shape of the room. There were six or seven chairs set round it; and in one of the windows there was another small table with two more chairs; the tables were covered with green cloth, the chairs were of a very old pattern, seated with a sort of faded velvet: the whole was in a most crazy state, and as tawdry and wretched as can be conceived; but in perfect keeping with the rest of the palace and royal establishment. I did

* This is the form in which the king and princes usually signify that you may depart; but in general it is said in a gracious manner, and with conciliating gesture; sometimes the prince signs to an attendant, who signifies to the visitor that he has "leave." The visitor is generally prepared for receiving this intimation by the second, or last callecoon being brought to the prince, in whose presence no other person is permitted to smoke.

not at this time see much of it, but all that could be seen was in a ruinous state, and choaked in every quarter with rubbish and filth.

From this ungracious interview, the meerza accompanied me to the bazar, always the chief object of attraction in an eastern town in the absence of any curious or interesting buildings; and though Resht cannot boast of its antiquities, its bazar is well worth the traveller's attention; for it is neat, clean, and extensive, and is well filled; and the handsomely set-out shops attracted as much notice by their gay appearance, as their owners could command by the invitations they addressed to passengers to enter and purchase their goods. The shops of the confectioners, druggists, and merchants of stuffs, were the gayest and most interesting; the former by the display of their sweetmeats and sugar balls, the druggists by their arrangement of bottles containing various coloured liquids and pigments; and the last by the quantity of rich chintzes, silks, muslins, gold and silver stuffs, and broad-cloth of all colours hung in festoons or piled in heaps beneath the extended penthouses of the shops.

We sat for some time conversing with the masters of some of these shops, friends of the meerza, who were hospitable and very civil, answering all the questions, which I put without mercy, and promising to procure for me all the information and samples of various articles which I required. I also formed acquaintance with a Turkish tātār, a native of Constantinople, who, through a friend in the goombrook-khaneh, or custom-house, expected to procure me all the information I required regarding the trade of Resht. This man, named Abdóolla Beg, had travelled over most of Asia; and partly in the capacity of a merchant on his own account: but, having been unfortunate in trade, was forced to become a servant, and to act sometimes as a tātār, or messenger, sometimes as a chiauos, or conductor of caravans, between Constantinople and the more eastern districts of Asia. At this time he was out of employment, and appeared to be very desirous to ingratiate himself with me, promising himself, no doubt, considerable advantage from so doing.

May 22d. As I was sitting this forenoon surrounded by visitors of various descriptions, one of the new comers informed the company,

that an express had arrived from Tehran, bringing news of the elder prince's speedy approach ; and while he was yet speaking, a gholaum of the prince's, who was one of the messengers, entered the room to make his salaam, and tell the news, which all the family of my host crowded round to hear. It appeared, from what I now learnt, that it was ~~not~~ the complaint of the Gheelanees alone that had occasioned the prince's summons to Tehran. The revenues of the province, which ought to have reached the royal treasury, after defraying all the government expences, amount to 200,000 toman's annually, or about 110,000*l.* sterling ; of this sum the king assigned 22,000*l.* for the expences of the two princes and their mother ; but this was insufficient, as it appears, to supply the prince's occasions, and, independent of the very large sums which he raised by irregular means, he fell short of the due remittance to the royal treasury 40,000 toman's. The king, alarmed at this defalcation, listened to the general voice of the province, which, without such a stimulant, he would probably have disregarded ; and ordered the prince to appear forthwith at Tehran, to give an account of his government. The sum of the messenger's news was, that the prince had succeeded entirely in pacifying the king, his father, who had remitted him the whole sum due, and even enlarged his annual allowance, at the same time confirming the prince in the government of Gheelan, and giving him his choice of several nobles of his court as a vizier ; that the prince's choice had fallen upon a particular person designated the munujoom bashce, or chief astrologer, with which choice the king was satisfied ; in short, he was returning in full triumph.

The gholaum, and one or two of the prince's servants who were present, having retired, it soon appeared how exceedingly unwelcome all this news was to the Gheelanees. That the prince should be confirmed in his government in spite of their deprecatory petitions was of itself sufficiently grating ; for they well knew he would return exasperated against them, on account of their complaints ; and with a rapacity sharpened by this hostile feeling, and the necessity of providing due remittances in future for the royal treasury. But his

choice of a vizier seemed to be a serious aggravation to this evil, for what cause I could not learn; they talked of him with the greatest bitterness, as their determined enemy, and one who, instead of restraining the excesses of the princes, would rather encourage them to plunder the people of the province.

The persons assembled in my room, among whom were several of considerable wealth and respectability in the place, were so completely absorbed by the news which had reached them, that they continued discussing its merits and different bearings upon their own interests, and those of the province, as if quite insensible to the presence of a stranger. Thus I received from their own lips, a full and striking confirmation of the character I had heard of the two royal brothers, and of the detestation in which they were held throughout all Gheelan. But the younger, Allee Kcza Meerza, was by far the most obnoxious in all respects; his insatiable rapacity was stated to be beyond all bounds, as daily practice proved.

An instance of this, by which my host Hadjee Meer Ismael was the sufferer, had occurred only the night before. The hadjee had purchased a fine Khorasanee horse for eighty-five tomauns, about 47*l.* sterling, intending him for his own particular use; but the young prince having unfortunately heard of the transaction, and being informed of the horse's high character, determined to appropriate him to himself; so, that when the poor hadjee, on his return to town two evenings ago, went to make his salaam at the palace, the prince rather abruptly said, "So, Hadjee, I hear you have purchased a horse. What kind of an animal is it? I am myself in want of a good horse, is yours a fine one?" "Oh! I can assure the Shahzadeh, that it is a very fine one," cried an officer of the prince, who had received his cue; "it is really well worth the Shahzadeh's acceptance, and I am sure the Hadjee would be proud to lay it at the august feet of the prince." "Ah! in that case I shall be glad to accept of it from the Hadjee; what say you, Hadjee?" What could the poor hadjee say, but "Pesh-cush-e Shahzadeh." This forenoon I heard the discussion which took place regarding its trappings and ornaments, and saw the horse led forth to be sent to the palace. The plundered hadjee him-

self came to see it decked out, and as he looked at his favourite for the last time, and gave his orders to his meerachor or chief groom, to carry it to the royal stables, I could hear the curses "not loud but deep," and see the gestures of anger and mortification, which, in spite of his assumed indifference, could not be controlled.

It is customary among all ranks in Persia for a person receiving a gift, to present the messenger with something proportioned to its value, as well in token of respect for the giver, as a mark of his bounty towards the servant, and five, ten, or fifteen tomauns, or from three to ten pounds sterling, is a common compliment, when a horse and trappings is presented, particularly to a great man. On this occasion, however, the prince thought fit to depart from established rules, and ordered the man to be presented with a piece of kudduck* for a kabba!

In the evening, my worthy friend the meerza came to accompany me to the river side, and I enjoyed the pleasure of a conversation in my own language all the more for having had my attention kept during the whole morning on the stretch, to catch the sense of what was passing in Persian, obscured as it was in a great degree by the *patois* of Gheelan. The meerza procured me another treat, in lending me a copy of Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, one of the books he brought from England, and which, he assured me, he read with perfect comprehension and enjoyment; indeed, his numerous pencil marks on the margin, proved that he could select and appreciate passages of particular beauty.

* Kudduck is a sort of cotton cloth dyed of various colours, as brown, or blue, or green, and used in common for kabbas, or upper vestures, in Persia: its value varies from four to six rupees, or from 5s. 6d. to 8s. sterling, per piece.

CHAP. X.

SHORT ACCOUNT OF GHEELAN. — EXTENT. — ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY. — CHARACTER OF THE GHEELANEES. — HILLY PARTS OF GHEELAN AND THEIR INHABITANTS. — COLLECTION OF REVENUE. — DISTRICT OF TALISH. — MUSTAPHA KHAN, AND OTHER CHIEFS OF TALISH. — CHARACTER OF THE TRIBES.

THAT part of Gheelan which is at present subject to the crown of Persia, stretches along the south and south-western banks of the Caspian sea, from the western boundary of Tunnacaboon in Mazunderan, to the banks of a small stream called Ashtara, four days' journey to the westward of Resht; a tract not quite two hundred miles in length: but the rivers Arras and Koor form, I believe, the natural boundary of Gheelan on the west, comprehending in that province the extensive and celebrated plains of Chowal Mogham. This north-western division of the province, including the place of Lankeroon*, is in possession of Russia.

The breadth of the low country, from the sea to the foot of the hills, varies exceedingly. The mountains advance sometimes to the water's edge, and in other places retire to a distance of thirty or forty miles; but the boundary of the province, with that of Azerbijan, runs along their more elevated crests, in a very irregular if not an indefinite line, in some places contracting its whole breadth to thirty, in others enlarging it to seventy miles. The mountainous part of the province includes the district of Talish, and is occupied almost entirely by wild clans, of whom some characteristic particulars will hereafter be given.

There are few countries more completely protected by nature against external aggression, than Gheelan; for its coast is lined with a belt of impenetrable forest, which opposes a most disheartening

* See page 144.

aspect to an invading foe, whose perplexity would be completed by the deep moordabs or backwaters, and extensive morasses equally covered with forest that lie behind this first barrier. At the same time these very obstacles would prove the best advantage to defenders acquainted with their intricacies, and afford them means of securely annoying their enemies. On the south, the passes through its mountains are of extreme steepness, difficulty, and length, and might be obstructed or defended with so much ease, that no hostile army, unassisted by treachery, could hope to force them; or if it succeeded in reaching the places below, would find itself embarrassed in a maze of jungle and morasses, impervious without a guide; and even under every advantage, presenting the most serious obstacles to the march of many troops encumbered with baggage and military stores. It is from these natural difficulties that Gheelan and Mazunderān have more often quietly followed the fate of the kingdom at large, in its various revolutions, than have fallen under the swords of invading powers.

It has often appeared to me matter of surprize, that a people thus protected by nature should submit as they do, peaceably, and even tamely, to be trampled upon, more than perhaps any other part of the kingdom, by rulers whom they detest, while an open and undefended country like Khorasan is constantly in rebellion. The Gheelanees are far from being deficient in courage, and are celebrated for their expertness in the use of the matchlock. Were these men united under a chief of ability and enterprize, they might defy the hated Kadjers with their utmost power; but turbulence or rebellion is not the character of the Gheelanees; they grumble, they hate their sovereigns, but bear what they inflict without attempting seriously to resist it.

This quiet and peaceable disposition may possibly be in some measure accounted for by their insulated situation. Being removed from the usual sphere of contending parties, and from all influence of foreign intrigue, they are deprived of the hope of foreign aid, and being also very much under the eye of their sovereign, the temptation to rebel might be checked by the difficulty of receiving support,

should they attempt it. But, indeed, under former reigns, these provinces were held to be the mines of their prince's wealth, and the sinews of his power; their strong holds and their roads were kept in repair, and their inhabitants conciliated by mild treatment. A long continuance of peace, however, has caused a relaxation of these precautions under the present improvident monarch, although it fortunately has not awakened a corresponding evil spirit among the people.

I believe it has been commonly supposed, that the inhabitants of the mountainous country bounding these provinces, yield but an imperfect obedience to the crown; but I do not find this idea supported by the fact; on the contrary, all the information I could obtain upon this subject, tends to prove, that from Shahrood, or the western boundary of Koordistan, upon the east, to Talish upon the west, the inhabitants are as regularly assessed as in other quarters, and pay upon their flocks and cultivation, as much as is customary elsewhere. The crown, indeed, may not receive from the remoter districts as much as from those more within the reach of its officers; but this is because the khans and governors to whom the collection is of necessity intrusted, themselves retain a part of what should be remitted to the royal treasury, and either return false statements of their receipts and disbursements, or pretend that the ryots are unable to pay the regular assessments, which cannot be submitted to very particular investigation. But in that part of the country which is more within reach, from Astrabad to the Russian frontier, the several districts appear for the most part to be quite under due subordination. The khans, with few exceptions, attend the courts of the king or princes, contribute soldiers for his service, and pay regular assessments. Many of the inhabitants, it is true, lead a very irregular and wandering life, and partake, to a certain degree, of the nature of Eels or wandering tribes, so that they cannot be subjected to modes of taxation so precise as those of the lower country and villages; but none of them escape; and the amount, more or less correctly stated according to circumstances, always reaches the treasury of their respective governments.

Throughout the whole of that great tract of country, which extends from the plains of Gourgaun to Lankeroon, including Astrabad, Mazunderān, Gheelan, and their mountainous districts, as well as their plains, the population may be divided into two distinct classes. The first, or that which inhabits the plains exclusively, live stationary in villages or towns, where they cultivate rice, wheat, sugar, cotton, silk ; and their habits are in all respects similar to those of the ryots or peasantry in other peaceable parts of the country. These people are of course regularly assessed, and the revenue derived from them is fixed, because their means are known. The second class consists of those who inhabit the skirts of the hills, and the vallies amongst them, as well as the villages nearest their base, during the cold season, but who retire in the hot weather to their summits, and are thus subject to a periodical change of abode. Some of these cultivate land, to an extent which holds proportion with the goodness of the soil they possess, and the advantageous position of their villages ; but their chief dependence is upon their flocks and herds, which in spring are sent to the lower hills for pasture, and with which they move higher and higher, as the season advances in warmth.

Those villagers who cultivate land, plant their rice, or whatever their crop may consist of, and having done so, leave a few of their number to watch its progress and perform the necessary operations ; while the greater number, with their wives and families, move upwards to their yeilaks along with their khans or chiefs, where they all lead a pastoral life, until the approach of cold weather and want of pasture force them down again. Each chief or tribe has its own yeilak and mountain lands, as well as its own villages and cultivatable lands below, distinct from others ; and they never interfere with one another ; but within their respective boundaries every one strays or plants his tent or his hut where he pleases.

It is evident, that the arrangement and collection of stated assessments among people who lead a life so irregular, must be a duty of great difficulty to the officers of government ; and much must

therefore be left to the chiefs, who retain for themselves as much as they possibly can. They, in their turn, are squeezed from time to time by government, and thus matters are equalized, though not in a very regular or systematic manner.

Before quitting this mountainous tract, it may be interesting to say a few words respecting the wild district of Talish, and the fierce tribes that occupy it ; which differ in some respects from the more peaceable inhabitants of the mountains to the eastward.

The district of Talish, according to the information I obtained, includes that portion of the mountainous tract extending from the Suffeedrood, or perhaps only from a pass a little further west, to the point where it is lost in the plains of Mogham at Andina Bazar. I know not whether the name of Talish applies originally to the district itself, or to the tribes which occupy it ; but it is now used indifferently for both. These various tribes or clans are probably descended from one stock ; they certainly have the same appearance, as well as the same manners and customs, and the same dispositions. Whatever may have been the nature or number of their subdivisions, they all, but a few years ago, obeyed Mustapha Khan, a chief of so much power and authority, that he had the hardihood to oppose the arms of Aga Mahomed Khan, the late King of Persia, himself.

The power of that monarch, however, was too great for the Talish chief, who took the resolution of inviting the Russians to his assistance, and gave them occupancy of Lankeroon, promising at the same time to yield them obedience as sovereigns of the country. In the year 1812, Mustapha Khan, and the Russian garrison, consisting of three hundred men, were driven by the Persians out of Lankeroon ; which, after this time, was fortified and supplied with a garrison of two battalions of Persian infantry, a company of artillery with five twelve-pounders, and one thousand five hundred Gheelanee irregular troops.

This force proved insufficient to protect it from the efforts of the Russians ; who attacked it on the 13th of January 1813, with a force of two thousand infantry, one thousand Cossacks, and three ves-

sels of war ; and who carried it by assault, after sustaining a loss, in killed and wounded, of one thousand two hundred men ; among the latter of whom was their brave commander General Kutlebusky.

Mustapha Khan continued till his death, in possession of Russian Talish, acknowledging a nominal obedience to the authorities of that empire, who, indeed, never demanded more ; and he has been succeeded by his seven sons, who have shared between them the whole country, from a little to the westward of Kergon-rood all the way to Mogham.

The present king of Persia with a view of weakening the family of Mustapha Khan, distributed the whole of Persian Talish among the principal families that remained, confirming to each such portion of country as it had become possessed of. He also created them khans, by way of increasing their importance, and giving them a motive for repressing the predatory incursions of Mustapha Khan's family. Of these chiefs the principal are, 1st, Mahomed Khan Massaul, who occupies the eastern part of the district, and whose clan is very powerful. 2d, Ibrahim Khan, of whom I know nothing. 3d, Mahomed Reza Khan, of Kiskar or Geskar, further to the west, who is more powerful than the two preceding. 4th, Mahomed Khoolee Khan, who lives at the village Poonul, still further to the west. These are all under the authority of the princes of Gheelan. 6th, Mahomed Khan Asalumeh, whose ycilak is called Loomere, has a powerful clan ; but Balla Khan, of Aghabler, the 7th, whose country extends westward to the Russian boundary, though his family was not originally of great importance, is now considered chief of all : his brother, Meer Goonah Khan, has been joined in authority with him by Abbas Meerza, to whose government of Azcibijan both these chiefs are attached.

These tribes, which have several features of character in common with the Lesghais of Dagestan, unite many of the better qualities of highlanders with the barbarity of savages. Their country being more accessible, and their chiefs more under controul than those of the Lesghais, they cannot be such systematic robbers, neither do they embark so regularly in the business of taking prisoners for sale, or for

ransom, which those formidable banditti practise ; but property and life are not at all more sacred in their hands, for they are continually marauding among themselves, and plundering their immediate neighbours, whenever they can : murder, I was assured, is an every-day crime with them, and no stranger would be safe for an hour in their country without the protection of their chiefs, or those whom their chiefs must obey.

These freebooters, however, are brave, and are devoted to their chiefs ; they are active and patient of fatigue, but are treacherous, merciless, and rapacious, towards all the world beside. I have heard of very few good qualities which they possess, and yet I think they are interesting, from the many points of resemblance in their patriarchal or feudal economy to the Highlanders of our own country, as they were in old times. There is amongst these tribes, not only the same devoted attachment of clansmen to their chief, but among that chief's retainers one might discover the same description of attendants, gillies and henchmen, which constituted the followers of a Highland laird. The sword and the rude firelock of the chief were borne in charge by one young man, while another took care of his cloak, and a third of his pipe. Others again were ready to assist his steps, or stand by his horse's head, on occasions of danger or difficulty. Crowds of idle hangers-on stood before the window, or lounged lazily about the doors, awaiting their lord's appearance ; and started into motion with the same springing activity whenever he gave the signal for marching.

But as the highlands of Scotland are far outdone in height and difficulty by the rugged mountains of Talish, so does the Talish mountaineer surpass the Scottish Highlander in the strength, ease, and agility, with which he springs up the longest and most precipitous passes ; even the little boys, dashing up the steep faces of the hills after the straying cattle, astonished me by the facility with which they moved along the most dangerous places, as if upon the plainest ground ; and I remember on a trying occasion envying the wind and powerful muscles of a mountaineer, who, overtaking me after a much longer journey than I had performed, bounded from stump to

stamp and from rock to rock with the ease of a mountain goat, while I could hardly crawl along as we toiled up the steep ascent.

The nature of the country, and the active modes of life of these people, have a great effect upon their general appearance. They are for the most part spare, raw-boned men, of robust though not tall frames, with countenances not unlike the Highlanders of Scotland. Their dress consists of a large loose pair of trowsers, made of coarse grey or dark brown stuff, reaching below the ancles, and generally tied into the charucks or shoes, which are nothing more than a leathern sock drawn round the instep, and tied on by a thong passing many times round the ancles. These are made to fit, or rather to draw very tight, and appear sufficient to guard the foot against the stones, while they ply so easily as to be very pleasant to the wearer, and enable him to move along at a great pace. The only vest they wear is a sort of ulcaluc, or long-tailed vest, fitted tight to the body, the skirts of which are stuffed into the trowsers, so that the bulk of the nether man greatly exceeds that of the upper parts. The head is covered by a sheep-skin cap of red or black wool. About the waist these mountaineers wear a leathern girdle, from which depends the formidable cummeh*, or Gheelanee knife; and over their shoulder they carry their toffung, in the use of which they are very expert. The ammunition is carried in numberless rows of loops for cartridges on the breast of his vest, and other parts of his person, or in small gourds called cuddoos, hollowed out to serve for powder-horn, &c. In his hand he carries a basket of plaited grass, in which he stows his provision or plunder. Such is the complete costume of a Talish highlander.

It would be interesting, if it were possible, to attain some correct ideas regarding the population of the province of Gheelan; but I know of no means by which this can be effected. That it is great in proportion to the superficial extent of ground, at least in the low country, no one who has travelled through it can for a moment doubt; but the towns as well as the villages are so completely en-

* Gheelanee dagger, see description and note, page 157.

veloped in the forests that it is impossible to form any correct idea either of their individual extent, or of the numbers contained in any particular portion of country. I have not even heard of any attempt on the part of government to form an estimate of the population of Gheelan.

There are few places in this province deserving the appellation of towns. Resht and Lahajan, in fact, stand alone as such. Enzellee is but a poor shipping village dependant on Resht, as Lankerood* is upon Lahajan. Fomen, Massouleh, Kiskar, Teregoraum, are large villages in which there are tolerable bazars, the first of these being by far the most considerable ; but there may be many villages as populous, though not such well established marts for trade ; and on the other hand, markets are periodically held at places which, except at these particular times, are almost destitute of inhabitants.

Of these, Resht and Enzellee are the two places with which I am best acquainted.

Resht, like Balfroosh, is so enveloped by trees, that no idea of its full extent can be formed from its appearance taken in any one point of view. I remember, when riding into the town by its eastern approach, that I could not discover above three or four houses upon the opposite side of a little stream which we crossed in entering ; and on the way to our lodging we passed through a dirty lane, along dead walls and by orchards, so that the impressions conveyed to a stranger by the first *coup d'œil* of this city were rather unfavourable. Exclusive of the bazars, which occupy a considerable share of the centre of the town, it is composed of small compartments, divided for the most part by narrow and obscure alleys. There are but few principal streets, and only some of them are paved ; others have merely a little gravel thrown in the centre for the water to run on ; while others are left unfashioned in any way, except in having a raised pathway at the sides for foot passengers, of great conve-

* Lankerood is an open roadstead at the mouth of a river, where vessels trading with Lahajan land their cargoes. It has no particular advantages that I could learn, over any other part of the coast, and has no harbour whatever.

nience in wet weather. There is far less comfort and neatness here than in Balfroosh, and much more of dirt, ruins, and other nuisances.

The bazars are the objects certainly best worthy of attention in Resht; they are extensive, regular, clean, and well kept. They consist of a series of three or four narrow streets, running parallel to each other, crossed at right angles by others, and including several caravanseries; so that the whole forms a very extensive assemblage of shops and warehouses. These bazars are well paved, but not entirely covered in from the weather, as in most other places. Instead of arched or domed roofs extending from one side of the street to the other, there are long pent-house roofs, projecting from either side nearly to the centre, covering the shops and raised terraces before them, as well as all foot-passengers, both from rain and from the sun, but leaving those who ride on horseback, who are forced to keep the gutter in the middle, exposed to the full effects of the weather, and of the torrents of water which in rain run off the roofs.

A darogha, or supervisor, sits all day in an office situated near the centre of the bazar, whose duty it is to regulate all disputes and matters of market police, to watch over weights and measures, and be answerable for order, cleanliness, and regularity. A part of this series of bazars and caravanseries is shut in by gates, which, being locked at night, protect all the property contained within them in the securest manner.

The shops, of which it is said there are twelve hundred, are constructed pretty much as they are in other places. A chamber behind serves to contain the principal stock of goods, of which a portion is hung upon pins, or ranged on shelves at the door, as well as upon tables, or piled in heaps upon a terrace raised three or four feet from the street in front of it; sometimes there are two chambers, one behind the other. The merchant himself sits among his wares, or reposes on a mat or carpet spread upon the terrace, where also may be seen many curious groups enjoying their pipes, and gravely discussing matters of commercial or political import while waiting for customers; a point for which they always have a ready

eye. Natives of various countries are seen passing and repassing on the pavement below them; and persons of every occupation, busily following their several callings, animate the scene, and enliven it with their gay costumes. A hum and bustle of business may be observed here greater than usually prevails in Persian towns, but less universal and of a quieter character than that which was remarked at Balfroosh.

There is no town in Persia where beggars are more numerous or importunate than in Resht; the streets and bazars swarm with the most miserable objects, and the passengers are pestered by wretches covered with filth, and suffering under the most loathsome diseases, who follow them and solicit attention with unwearied perseverance. Leprosy and other cutaneous disorders are constantly forced upon their view, and almost into contact with them. But among all these instances of human misery I was most shocked with the sight of the *opium-eaters*. These poor wretches, victims to the most dangerous and fascinating of all indulgences, unable to purchase the drug which formed their only comfort, and perhaps their sole support, wandered about the streets, exposing to the passengers their emaciated forms and swelled limbs, their shrunk and bloodless countenances, and their parched lips, as they rolled their protuberant and bloodshot eyes from side to side with a distracted air, screaming earnestly, "Ther-ia-kee, Ther-ia-kee!" (I am an opium-eater, I am an opium-eater!) "For the sake of God, of the Prophet, and of Allee, give me some money to buy opium, or I shall die!" It was a dreadful warning to the young and unpractised debauchee, and, like most warnings, generally neglected.

Of another description, and very different in character, were the fakeers and dervishes, or religious mendicants. These impudent but often amusing vagabonds practised largely their expedients for levying contributions on the purses of the multitude. Some, fantastically dressed in tattered robes, and caps ornamented with flowers and feathers, or still more wildly wreathed with their own matted and twisted locks, ran in groups about the bazars, vociferating, in the cant of their caste, "Yah Allee! Huk! Huk!" and clamorously demand-

ing charity. Others, seated in booths or corners, sold charms against all diseases and magic, tusbees or rosaries, and pieces of clay brought from Mecca or Kerbela to be used in prayer. Others again, confiding in their known celebrity, sat quietly coiled up in their dens by the way side, attended by some of their disciples, beholding with a satirical grin, or with imperturbable and abstracted gravity, the bustling scene before them ; while the numerous dupes of their fancied wisdom poured in their tribute of presents in return for the councils or instruction received from the pious hypocrites. All these scenes afforded much amusement, and rendered the bazars of Resht always an interesting lounge.

The city of Resht is divided into nine *muhulehs* or divisions. I was informed by the *darogha* of the bazar, and his account was confirmed by that of several other people, that in the time of the late governor, Khosroo Khan, these contained three thousand houses or families ; but as some of these families are stated to have included from one hundred and fifty to two hundred individuals, while others consisted of but two or three, it is difficult to strike an average, or to form a probable conjecture as to the population of that period. The most rational accounts I could obtain, assigned to the city at present a population of between thirty and forty thousand males, exclusive of women and children ; but as such accounts are at best but inaccurate, and the reporters were often apt to include in their estimate villages or *muhulehs* which do not strictly belong to the town, I took pains to correct them by such observation as lay in my power ; the means, indeed, were small, and lay chiefly in general remarks and inferences drawn from the appearance of the bazars and other public places, the crowd in the streets, &c. &c. : correcting the above statement by this last, and also taking into consideration that the presence of a court always carries with it an increased number of people, I am inclined to believe that Resht contains between sixty and eighty thousand souls.*

* Futeh-Allee Khan (the son of Hedayut Khan, formerly ruler of Gheelan,) with whom I became acquainted at Tabreez, declared to me that the number of inhabitants did not exceed 30,000. But I observed in this man a strong disposition to diminish the

In the days of Hedayut Khan,* who ruled Gheelan during the reigns of Kurreem Khan, and Aga Mahomed Khan, there was a large colony of Armenians, a considerable number of Russians, with many Hindoos and Jews, residing at Resht: all having their separate caravanseries or divisions to dwell in; but excepting a very few Jews, not one of all these now remains in the place. Hedayut Khan, a chief of enlightened views, was fully aware of the importance of protecting people who so greatly benefited the commerce and increased the wealth of the place; but the bigoted and shortsighted inhabitants of Resht themselves, far from entering into the liberal sentiments of their chief, oppressed and reviled every foreigner of a religion different from their own to such a degree, that one by one they were driven from the city. Previous to the time of Khosroo Khan they had almost all disappeared; but that nobleman had the good sense to pursue the steps of his predecessor, and attempted, by every offer of favour, to allure them back; in this he so far succeeded that the Armenians were induced to re-occupy their division and caravanseries:

importance of his former country, which in some cases he attempted to do with so little measure as quite to defeat his own end. But I have the opinions of several very respectable men, residents though not natives of the town, confirming the estimate I have given, and I am sure the numbers daily seen in the bazars were indicative of a population far greater than that allowed to it by Fuleh Allee Khan.

* According to Mr. Gmelin, the Russian traveller who visited Gheelan during the government of Hedayut Khan, that chief was the son of one Hadjee Shamal Khan, who had been governor of Resht, and was assassinated in 1752. The son was placed in charge of the province by Kurreem Khan the Vukeel, who permitted him to exercise almost unlimited authority, upon paying a contribution of 2,500 batmans (about 30,000lbs. English) of silk, besides other less fixed and arbitrary exactions, all of which the governor in vain sought to shake off. According to Gmelin he maintained a very considerable degree of state, and 10,000 troops, 1500 of which were kept in constant pay and readiness. He was a man of superior endowments, but too much addicted to pleasure, and passed much of his time among his women and Georgian boys in feasts and debauchery, and indulging to excess in intoxicating liquors. But the Gheelanees were happy and contented under his rule, which I always heard represented as mild and equitable. He endeavoured, but ineffectually, to maintain himself against the growing power of Aga Mahomed Khan; he was forced to yield, and flying by sea with a view of seeking protection and assistance from the Russians, he was murdered in an island of the Caspian sea, where the ship had been forced to put in from stress of weather.

they also built a place of worship, and were about to erect a set of baths, when the good people of Resht, alarmed at so great indulgence to unbelievers, exclaimed, that Khosroo Khan himself was turning Armenian; and beset him so sorely, that it became dangerous for him to grant the immunities intended. His recall not only cut short the rising prosperity of these merchants, but destroyed their very existence: they quitted the city, and now, not an Armenian, Russian, or Hindoo, is to be found in Resht.

Many merchants of that city, with whom I conversed on the subject, regretted extremely the loss of these people, of whose utility they were quite sensible, and remarked, that were it only the convenience of having a number of rich and monied men about the bazar they would desire their return. "If we at any time required," said they, "the use of a few thousand tomana, to carry on a speculation, we could at all times obtain them from these people, upon fair security;" but now there are few in Resht who have any thing like such a sum at command. There is but little hope of so desirable an event for that city, as the return of these capitalists to a place from whence they had been driven by injurious treatment: the conduct of its present rulers is more likely to deprive the city of its little remaining prosperity, than to add to it by alluring strangers to settle within its walls.

With respect to the trade of Resht, it is sufficient to observe here, that the town is one of the most considerable entrepots on the Caspian for exchanging the commodities of Persia with those of Astracan, and is the chief mart for silk, the staple produce of Gheelan. A great quantity of this article is made in the province, but like all similar objects in Persia, it is very difficult to ascertain the actual amount. During my protracted residence in Resht, it was a subject which occupied much of my attention, and I have reason to think that the following statements, resulting from the comparison of many accounts, may be near the truth.

The terms of money-lending at this time in Resht, were from four to twelve per cent. per month, on security reckoned fair for the

country. The great men here, as in most parts of Persia, are desperately in debt, and are forced to borrow money at most extravagant rates, from twenty to fifty per cent. per month, or half the whole principal sum; but these rates are almost nominal, for little of the money is in general ever repaid. A great deal, it is true, is sometimes made in this way; particularly when silk is taken in payment, on terms favourable to the lender; but on the whole much more is lost.

The annual amount of silk which passes through the custom-houses of Gheelān, is about 60,000 mauns Shahee, or nearly 900,000lbs. avoirdupois.* Of these, 20,000 mauns Shahee are exported to Astracan; 20,000 to Ispahan, Yezd, Cashan, and other parts of the province of Irak; and 20,000 to Bagdad, Aleppo, and their vicinity. The portion which is manufactured in the province is not taken into account here, because it does not pay duty.

The following more detailed account, which confirms the above, I give, because I have reason to believe it more accurate than any of the others in my possession. Hadjee Moolla Baba, from whom I received it, was a person, in whom, from the experience I had of his character, I should be more inclined to place confidence than in most Persians I have known; he was besides a native of Tabreez, and less dependant upon the rulers and natives of Gheelan than others who furnished me with information; and above all, he had himself been the farmer of the customs in this province for several years. He says, the whole customs of the province upon exports and imports may amount to 45,000 tomauns†, or about 25,000%. sterling annually, one year with another. Of this sum 15,000 tomauns arises from a duty of two rupees levied upon every maun Shahee of silk that is sold,

* A maun Shahee is equal to two mauns Tabreez, or to about 14½lbs. avoirdupois weight.

† To avoid the necessity of repetitions in denominations of money, the reader may estimate the Persian tomaun at about 11s. sterling, a Persian real or rupee being about 1s. 4½d. sterling, according to the rate of exchange between India and Persia when I was there.

whatever be its quality. Now this gives a result of exactly 60,000 mauns Shahee, as in the other statement: if this quantity be divided into ten parts, he says that three, or 18,000 mauns Shahee, go always to Astracan; a like quantity to Bagdad, and the country to the west of Persia; two parts, or 12,000 mauns, are sent *via* Tabreez to Aleppo, Constantinople, and the other parts of Turkey: and the other two parts go to Irak; that is to say, Yezd, Cashan, Ispahan, &c.

Resht itself being an inland town, all its transmarine commerce is carried on through the port of Enzellee. This is situated on a sand-bank which divides the sea from the waters of a large lake or back water, formed by the waters of several streams which have a common outlet at this place; but as a more particular description will be given of this harbour, the only one upon the southern coast of the Caspian between Kizzilagatchi at the mouth of the rivers Koor and Arras, in the province of Sheerwan, and the bay of Ashruff, near Astrabad, nothing further need be said of it at present.

The full revenue of Gheelan is stated to amount to from 200 to 210,000 tomauns, or from 110,000*l.* to 115,000*l.* sterling a year; this arises from the customs, and the land tax, which prevails all over the country. The former, according to Hadjee Moolla Baba, should produce about 45,000 tomauns one year with another; but I understood that the present renter of the customs paid the prince 25,000 for Resht, 8,000 for Enzellee, 4,000 for Lahajan, and something for Fomen, which made up the whole to about 40,000 only. His collection may exceed this by a fourth, which is his own profit. The rate of duty is one in twenty, or five per cent. on all imports, at a calculation which is generally settled between the parties. No exports except silk and silk goods are taxed; the standing duty on the former is two reals per maun Shahee, or two mauns Tabreez, equal to 14½*lbs.* English; on manufactured goods it is, I believe, the same as upon foreign goods imported.

The land tax is the same as is levied in other places, amounting to one-fifth of the gross produce; and I believe there is also a tax laid upon shops in the towns. Of the whole amount thus raised, the king receives but 160,000 tomauns, the balance of from 40 to

50,000 being assigned as a provision for maintaining the prince, his brother, and their mother ; and I have heard it declared by very respectable merchants as their firm belief, that the prince collects from the province double the stipulated sum, or at least 400,000 tomauns a year ; thus squandering on his own family, or hoarding, about 240,000 tomauns annually.

The Gheelanees are far from an ill-looking race of people ; they are not so ruddy as the natives of the higher provinces, and persons of a dark, almost of a black complexion are oftener to be met with than among these ; but they are by no means deficient in size or muscular strength. Their features are well marked and fine, and a bad beard is uncommon. I have had frequent occasion to remark, that the Persian children are beautiful ; more so, I think, than they commonly are in Europe ; but in this place they were particularly so. In the course of my rambles among the different divisions of the town, I have often stopped to look at the crowds of boys and girls that ran about, occupied with their little plays ; all of them handsome, and many of them perfect pictures of health and beauty. Some amongst the girls of six or seven years old possessed features so regularly delicate, and shapes so elegant and so formed, that they united, in a very remarkable manner, the charms of their age with the maturer beauty of approaching womanhood.

Of the women, a stranger could seldom have it in his power to speak from extensive experience ; but many of those among the lower and middling classes whose faces I saw were extremely handsome, and possessed a delicacy of feature and expression seldom seen in Europe, except among the better orders of society. Of the superior classes I could not possibly see many, except when a veil put carelessly on chanced to be blown aside, in a path little frequented, a circumstance which not unfrequently occurred ; and upon such occasions I have seen a lovely face, although I cannot say that it was fairer than, or differed materially from, those of its owner's attendants.

The beauty of the higher orders might perhaps be accounted for in some measure by the constant importation of female slaves for

the seraglios, from Georgia, Circassia, and Armenia ; a practice which must tend to improve their personal appearance ; but it cannot affect the lower classes, whose good looks are probably to be referred to the life of moderate and healthy labour they lead, in a fruitful country, the climate of which is nowise intemperate.

There is little peculiarity in the dress of the Gheelanees ; some of them wear, instead of the Persian kabba, or outer vest, a dress more resembling the Turkoman gown, but smaller, barely meeting in front, and buttoning in a straight line from the breast to the waist. The shulwars, or large trowsers, rolls of cloth for stockings about the legs, and the Coordish shoe or leathern sock, are worn here as in Mazunderan ; but instead of the common Persian dagger, they hang the Lesghae *cummeree**, or broad two-edged knife, from the girdle. This terrible weapon, so deadly in brawls and private quarrels, is formed of tempered steel ; its blade varies from one to two feet in length, and from two to three inches broad close to the hilt, exceedingly sharp on both edges, and ending in a very sharp point ; it is fitted with a handle of horn, or black wood, adapted to the size of the hand. It is a perfect cut and thrust weapon, and the larger ones, from their breadth, size, and shape, put me in mind of the description given us of the Roman sword. The wounds which they inflict are large and ghastly, and when given in serious earnest generally mortal. These *cummerees* are used throughout all the hilly districts of Azerbijan, and Gheelan, &c. as well as in Armenia and Georgia, commonly serving in place of swords, and are manufactured in most of the towns between Tabreez and Teflis inclusive.

The Indian method of carrying loads slung on either end of a stick carried across the shoulder is practised here ; grass, fruit, vegetables, and other market commodities are brought into town in this manner ; and it is the custom of every one to carry a small basket of reeds in his hands, in which he puts every thing he re-

* Or *cummeh*, probably from *cummer*, *the waist*, being worn dependant from the girdle.

quires for common use, or for journeys ; it serves as a pocket, and a wallet too ; and being flexible, it folds up, and goes under the arm when empty, and expands as required when filled.

The cows of Mazunderan and Gheelan are of small size, and resemble the lesser breeds of that animal in India ; they have small humps, but those of the bulls are larger ; they differ from the cattle of Upper Persia, which are of a better size, have less of the hump, and sometimes resemble the English breeds. The sheep are all small, and of the common-tailed sort ; but few of the *dhoombas*, or fat-tailed sheep, so common in other parts of Persia, are here to be seen ; the few there are have been brought chiefly as pets, or by some accidental circumstance.

No large horses are bred in these provinces, as neither the climate nor the nature of the country seem at all adapted to them : but there are excellent ponies, that answer all purposes much better. They are strong, stout animals, very much resembling Highland ponies, which will carry enormous burthens through their worst roads in winter ; near 300lbs. is the usual load, but I have seen them carry a great deal more. The road to Peeree Bazar, the village where goods for Enzellee are shipped from Resht, extends for five miles through one continued series of sloughs and bogs in deep jungle ; and having never been regularly made, each carrier leads his beasts as he best can, taking a new tract when former ones have become impassable. No weather ever puts more than a temporary stop to the traffic along this wretched path ; and it is entirely carried on by means of these ponies, a certain number of which are continually employed in it, and carry their heavy loads to the journey's end, although after every shower they sink to the girths at each step.

CHAP. XI.

THE RAMAZAN, OR MAHOMETAN LENT. — STRICTNESS OF A ZEALOUS MUSSULMAN. — METHODS OF EVADING ITS SEVERITY. — AUTHOR'S VISIT TO ENZELLE. — MISERABLE ROADS. — PEEREE BAZAR. — PASSAGE ACROSS THE LAKE TO ENZELLE. — RECEPTION BY THE GOVERNOR AT THAT PLACE. — INDIFFERENT LODGINGS. — REMONSTRANCES. — APOLOGIES. — BAY AND HARBOUR OF ENZELLE. — VILLAGE. — VESSELS BUILT THERE. — RETURN TO RESHT.

MAY 23d. 1821. This was the first day of the ramazān, the Mahometan lent, when every good mussulman fasts from sun-rise till sunset. This ceremony is religiously observed in appearance, even by those who have not the least spark of zeal in their hearts ; but many indulge in secret in those refreshments, without which, numbers of the faithful could hardly drag on existence. Not only food is prohibited, but even a glass of water, or smoking a pipe are equally prescribed ; in short, nothing must pass the lips, and I have heard people say, that in strictness, a man should not swallow his saliva. Such exceeding self-denial is considered both praiseworthy and profitable ; it serves as an expiation for past crimes, and greatly shortens the path to paradise. This may serve to account for the rage which I once saw a most zealous observer of the ramazān thrown into, by the discovery that he had inadvertently chewed a leaf or two of water-cresses, given him by some wicked person ; he flew at the wag in a transport of rage, and was hardly prevented from poniarding him ; he spit out the leaves with every appearance of loathing, and not satisfied with washing his mouth, and picking his teeth in every possible way, forced himself to retch violently, lest any of the unholy leaf, or liquid from it, should have reached his stomach.

The method pursued during the whole ramazān, by those who can afford it, is to turn the night, as much as they can, into day, and

vice versâ. They accordingly sleep till late in the morning, and much even during the day, going but little about in the forenoon, except to the mosques, which about noon have always a concourse of people, and where service is performed. A gun is fired in all large towns as the sun goes down, the signal that fasting has ceased; but the greater number of true believers think it imprudent to eat a hearty meal immediately. They break their fast on the same light fare which they use at breakfast, and eat bread, cheese, sweetmeats, roots, radishes, and turnips cut into small sprigs, sour milk, plain boiled rice, with a little sherbet. Some people think it proper to commence with a small cup of warm water, which, they say, relaxes the stomach, rendered stiff by long inaction, and enables it to receive the food without injury. After this scanty meal they say sundry prayers, and go to bed for some hours. About one, or at most two hours before sunrise, they get up again, and partake of a solid meal of pillaw and rice, meat stews, eggs fried in sweet and sour sauce, omelets, plain and of vegetables, and all the luxuries of the Persian kitchen. This is the chief meal and only support until the evening; many, however, make these previous fasts an excuse for gluttony, and indulge in two meals, more solid than at other times. Some even take the light breakfast, then a solid dinner, and towards sunrise another fully as substantial repast, to help them through the weary day of penance and starvation.

The ramazân being a moveable fast, falls particularly heavy when it occurs, as was the case when I was present, in the hot weather, and during the long days. It is then that even the most zealous are exhausted with thirst, if not with hunger; and the struggles of virtue are violent and painful. It is then also severely felt by the opium-eaters, and the inveterate smokers, and few, if any of these can comply with what they believe to be their duty, or abstain from their periodical intoxication. The former are seen strolling about under the influence of a restless lassitude; their eyes violently inflamed, their mouths white and parched; sometimes they creep into corners, and being unhappy themselves, bestow their ill-humour on every one who comes near them. The smokers, equally

miserable, though not equally subdued, endeavour by sleep to pass away the miserable hours, until the time of indulgence comes round, when, without the loss of a moment, the calleeoon or Persian pipe is in their hands; and then the long indraught of the delicious fumes, with the half-closed eyes, and features relaxing into good humour, show, by the deep delight they express, how painful the privation has been.

For opium-eaters, indeed, there is some degree of indulgence to be purchased; the law, or the moollahs, allow such as cannot, without fear of death, or great derangement of the system, abstain from their usual dose for twelve hours, to take what is required to support them, provided they give a proper consideration for the indulgence, in alms to the poor or the mosque; and I believe there are but few who do not contrive to show cause for it; — but for the poor smokers, I believe, there is no such exemption; the pipe is not considered necessary to life, and may therefore be laid aside for twelve or fourteen hours; but I fear, that few determined opium-eaters or smokers ever trouble themselves to solicit the indulgence, or conquer their craving, but quietly retiring into the recesses of their dwellings, gratify their appetites without reference to priest or moollah.

My friend Meerza Abdool Rezāk has often told me of his stealing away to his European friends, during the ramazān, when he longed for his calleeoon, and described, ludicrously enough, the care with which he sought to remove all traces of such abomination, either to the sight or to the smell, before he dared visit his Mahometan acquaintance. Many of his brethren, he assured me, practised such tricks; and I had, during this ramazān, occasion to know that he told truth.

I once asked a strict Mussoolman whether, if he were so thirsty as to feel himself in danger of choking or expiring, he would not hold himself excused in taking a cup of water; he hesitated much, and at last said, that if it could be proved necessary to save life, then indeed it might be admitted; but it was proper to go to all extremities, even to the hazard of life, rather than commit the horrid

impiety of breaking this solemn fast. "But in cases of sickness?" "Ah! in sickness, a dispensation might be had certainly; if a physician recommended it as indispensable to his patient's recovery;" but my rigid friend seemed disposed to think, a true and pious Mahometan, even in sickness, ought rather take his chance, than infringe the rules prescribed by the prophet. Travellers, however, are either held excused from keeping ramazān, or choose to consider themselves so; and all my servants availed themselves of this privilege, to discuss my good pillaws, to the great horror, I believe, of many of the pious Gheelanees.

Being desirous to visit Enzellee previous to quitting Resht, I applied for a letter from the prince to Baba Allee Khan, the governor of that place; and having obtained it, after many delays, I took a single attendant, with another to lead back my horses from Peeree Bazar, and set out for that place, about ten o'clock in the morning.

It might be expected, that the road which conducts the traffic of a large commercial city to its port of shipment, should be clear, spacious, and kept in good repair; that the shipping-place should be of considerable size, well furnished with warehouses for storing goods, and caravanseries for the accommodation of merchants; and that a hum and bustle of business should prevail there. Nothing of all this is the case. I have before had occasion to advert to the badness of the road, but it is almost impossible to conceive how execrable it really is. A number of watercourses, taken for the purposes of irrigation from the river of Resht, intersect the first part of the way, which in many places runs amongst a maze of bushes and briers; the latter part traverses a morass covered with thick forest, where the only tracks consist of a series of the muddy heights and hollows formerly taken notice of, in which our horses sunk at every step up to their girths; often indeed no track whatever could be traced, and the horses plunged at random among roots and stumps of trees in soft morass, which threatened to swallow them up riders and all. It would appear that the neglected state in which this road is suffered to remain, is owing as much to motives of policy as to indolence; for it is considered, and has indeed been proved, more than once, a

means of safety to Resht. The Russians once took possession of Enzellee; and guided by an Armenian, whom they had bribed, they attempted to proceed to Resht; but they totally failed in their efforts, and were shot at, and destroyed from behind every bush, without being able to see their enemy. After losing a number of men, without making any progress, they were forced to retreat, and finally to evacuate Enzellee. Thus they have the excuse which semibarbarous nations may plead, who, ignorant of the means of defending a good road, purposely render it bad, to baffle the approach of an enemy.

However much a traveller may be astonished at the badness of the road*, he will not be less so at the sight of the shipping-place. After leaving the forest and morass, we found ourselves near a small creek, into which the river of Resht, which ran all the way upon our right hand, empties itself, though greatly diminished by irrigation. On the banks stood two or three wretched huts, inhabited by custom-house officers, and a few toffunchees; there was not even a shed for goods, nor a caravansery to be seen;—houses and villages might exist in the neighbourhood, but none were in sight of this place. The creek, a black sluggish stream, about ten yards broad, bordered with thick jungle, and the three above mentioned huts, was all that constituted the shipping-place of Resht, the capital of Ghecelan.

There are generally boats at this place, that go to and return from Enzellee every hour or two in the course of the day; but there were at present none to be found, and we waited for more than an hour, before some of the toffunchees, who had been sent out in search, informed us that a boat at some distance from the creek was ready to start. We lost no time in going to the place where she lay, at a landing station resembling the one we had left, boasting, however, of only one hut. Here we found the boatmen still bargaining, so that there was no chance of moving for several hours. A night-arrival at Enzellee was certainly to be deprecated; but as there was

* Gmelin takes notice of the extreme badness of the road between Resht and Pee-ree Bazar; he calls the latter a moderate sized town. It certainly had no pretensions to such a denomination when I saw it.

no help for it, we secured our passage, and lying quietly down waited the movement of the crew.

The principal article of this boat's lading was naphtha; of which a great quantity is brought at all times from Bako, in the province of Sheerwan, and is used throughout Gheelān for burning in lamps, and for a variety of other purposes. There is both white and black naphtha, but the black is most in use; it is of a dark tarry brown colour, perfectly opaque, and not much thicker than train oil; it costs at Bāko about an abbas, or $3\frac{1}{4}d.$ per maun Shahee of 14lbs.; at Enzellee it sells for three times the sum; but the carriage from Enzellee to Resht is so expensive, that it sells in that town for little less than a rupee, or about $1s. 4d.$ per maun Shahee; one consequence, by the way, of the execrable roads. The naphtha is carried in skins, as water is in India, several being slung at once across the back of one of their ponies.

After nearly four hours' delay, during which I was not a little entertained by the squabbles of the boatmen and their customers, we shoved off, and proceeded down the creek in a very winding course for about two miles, pushing her along for want of room to row, until we entered the wide expanse of the Enzellee lake. Our passage down the creek was extremely unpleasant, the jungle was close, the day very hot, and the air loaded with a stench of naphtha, stinking fish, and other putrid substances, together with marshy exhalations, all of which must make Peerec Bazar a very unwholesome place. It was a great relief to get into the open water, and enjoy the freshness of a breeze, which soon began to blow fairly for us towards Enzellee. The lake stretched to the east and west further than we could distinguish; but we saw the village for which we were bound, with the few trees around it, rising from the horizon, distant about twelve or fifteen miles, and bearing north by west. We could trace the forests which fringe the shores of this lake, rising like islands above the water; besides several real islands, to some of which we closely approached in our course. The clouds which had long threatened, now broke in rain, and, added to the falling night, prevented further observation. We stole rapidly along till within a mile

of the village, when the wind failed us, and the boatmen had a hard pull to shore. This detained us till a late hour ; and I was right glad to land and proceed immediatly to the house of the governor, to whom the letter procured from the prince was directed.

As I passed along the bazar, where lights were merrily glancing in the open shops and sheds, I saw that the people were all busily employed in breaking the irksome fast of the day. The savoury steam rising from the smoking pillaws saluted both my senses of vision and of smell, and sharpened an appetite worthy of any Mussulman that ever kept the ramazān fast, and which I hoped to satisfy at the expence of his excellency the governor.

Upon reaching the house, I sent up my letters by my servant, and sat down in the gate-way, expecting to be summoned up stairs in a few moments. This, however, did not happen, and I waited an hour cooling my heels, but neither message nor servant appeared. I was hungry, wet, and sleepy ; so that the time did not appear shorter than it really was. I was so situated that I could distinguish by the sound the company above stairs, going through the various stages of the dinner, and could hear that they were discussing the subject of my arrival ; I even thought orders were given to prepare a chamber for me, and thus expectation was kept alive in this most unpleasant predicament, for what seemed to me an endless length of time. At last my servant came back, accompanied by another person, both growling : the stranger told me, that he was sent to conduct me to a lodging, and I followed him through dirty lanes, under a heavy fall of rain, to the door of a house where we heard voices of people carousing in a merry key. It was locked, however, and all the eloquence of my conductor, who I found was the darogha of the bazar, could not induce the tenants of the place to open and admit us. Muttering a few curses and terms of low abuse, the darogha now turned to me, and enquired how many we were in company. Upon learning there were but two, he seemed relieved ; and said he would give us a lodging in his own chamber in the bazar. Thither accordingly he led us, and unlocking a small door, ushered us into a small cell, like

a very wretched shop, coolly observing that we might remain here at our ease for the night.

There was in the whole of this proceeding something so strangely inhospitable, so different from the manner in which I had hitherto been treated, even in the least friendly quarters, that it first struck me with surprise and then with indignation. I turned to the darogha in a manner he seemed little to expect, and told him what I felt in pretty strong terms ; asking him if he himself conceived that this was the proper way in which to treat a guest of the prince's, and a gentleman of a friendly nation ; assuring him at the same time that the prince should undoubtedly know of the indignity I had received, as soon as I returned to Resht ; and he might be perfectly aware of the punishment that would then await those who had been to blame. The darogha appeared to awake as if from a dream at this remonstrance ; confessed there was blame, hoped I would forgive what had passed ; and assured me the khan was ignorant of my true character, but that he would now send for some dinner, and in the morning all would be set to rights,

I replied to this, that I was at no loss for the motives which had prompted them to such treatment of their prince's guest, and that I ought neither to forgive them, nor to accept of their excuses ; adding, that he was right to say, all should be put to rights in the morning ; for it was my fixed intention to proceed to Resht, and lay the matter before the prince, his master, who certainly would put things on a better footing ; as for his dinner, I declared I should touch none of it. in a place where so much inhospitality had been shewn me. The darogha muttered something further in excuse, and ran out almost immediately to fetch the dinner, which was very soon brought, evidently from the khan's house close by. But though half famished, I refused to taste a morsel, observing, that if the khan had been disposed to pay me hospitable attention he should not have left me standing in the rain for more than an hour, but have invited me up, and offered to share his own food with me : at all events, that if at first he was not aware of the predicament in which I stood, he should

have relieved me from it as soon as he did so, and asked me to sit with him until a lodging could be got ready: but that to send me away to hunt for lodgings in the rain like a dog, and then to cram me into the same hole with my own servant, was so disrespectful a proceeding, I could on no account excuse it.

The noise of this transaction had now spread; the khan became aware of his error, but his pride forbade him making sufficient concessions to a "*kaffer feringhee*" ("dog of a christian"); nevertheless, he sent several persons to me with apologies and explanations, entreating me to eat and be pacified. I thought it right, however, to take a determined part; and they were forced to remove the untasted food, while a little while afterwards I made my dinner upon a morsel of bread and some crumbs of cheese, which my servant went out and purchased by my desire. Soon after I stretched myself upon the boards, and, in spite of multitudes of very active fleas, enjoyed some hours of profound repose.

May 24th. A rainy night ushered in a dull rainy morning; but our couch was not of a nature to tempt us to indulge in our sleeping, neither did the duties of the toilet occupy much time. My first care was to secure another lodging, and I sent my servant to seek for one; but he was either awkward at the business, or the people of the town were too much in awe of their governor to risk displeasing him by harbouring a guest who had left his house.

Breakfast was brought me, but I refused to accept of it, as I had of dinner the night before, for I felt convinced that my only plan was to be resolute; and the weather not permitting me to go out, I sat quietly in my wretched hole, waiting what should come to pass. The darogha occasionally sat at a little distance from me, watching silently the displeasure which was evident in my countenance; and at times went out, probably on some errand connected with his charge; while other persons occasionally peeped in, or entered and stood for a while, whispering and looking cautiously at me, as people stare at a wild animal in his cage, trembling lest he spring out upon them. After a while, the khan's son, a fine young lad, sent no

doubt by his father, came to see me, and endeavoured in the same way as the darogha and others had done, to explain matters to my satisfaction; he assured me, that his father did not know of my arrival; that, misled by the wording of the letter, he believed I was only on the way; that far from meaning any disrespect to me, he was desirous to pay me every mark of distinction; and reiterated a tissue of flimsy excuses, the inconsistency of which I occasionally took the trouble to point out. But after turning a deaf ear for a long time to all offers of reconciliation, that it might not appear too easily obtained, when I saw that no further good was likely to result from maintaining the appearance of anger, but on the contrary that a longer resistance to their offers of apology might give them cause for thinking me unreasonable, I suffered myself to be persuaded, and accompanied the young khan up stairs to his father's house, where a chamber was now made ready for me.

In justice to the country and the people, I must say, that I do not remember ever having met with such churlish conduct in any place, as I experienced on this occasion; and in assuming this haughty and decided line of conduct, I was actuated far more by a desire to prevent a repetition of such indignities to any of my countrymen whom circumstances might bring here in future, than to indulge petulant or angry feelings for an insult offered to myself.

The governor, Baba Allee Khan, soon after entered the room; he was a respectable and rather good looking man, with long Persian features, and a beard dyed of a deep reddish brown. It often happens that the attempt to save a trifle involves a great expence; such was the case now with my friend the khan; he was evidently desirous to atone for what had past, and now lavished upon a stranger, whom he had at first despised, those smiles, a very small portion of which would at an earlier period have satisfied his guest abundantly. I repeated to him much of what I had before told his son; but he assured me, with so much earnestness, that he was ignorant of my arrival, and of the inattention with which I had been treated, blaming all the while his senseless servants for their foolish conduct, that

whether his assertions were false or true, his desire to be excused was clear enough ; and I felt it far better to be on good terms than to waste time in altercations.

The khan now entered with more readiness and good humour into conversation, than if nothing untoward had passed ; and I got much of information from him regarding the revenue, produce, and resources of the country. Although fasting himself, he ordered breakfast for me, and left strong injunctions with his son, and the boy's tutor, to see that I wanted for nothing ; an order which they executed with so much zeal, that I was hardly left a moment to myself during the day.

When the forenoon cleared up, I went out and examined the village, the harbour, and all that was to be seen about the place ; and took a sketch of the harbour, from an island which forms the side opposite the village.

The bay or lake of Enzellee is nothing more than a very large backwater, formed by the waters of several streams, and separated from the sea by a long narrow strip of sand, through which there is but one passage of communication. The extent of this lake may be from thirty-five to forty miles in length, by twelve to fifteen in breadth ; the greater part lies to the westward of a line that would join Resht and Enzellee, and which would be nearly a meridian line. There is reason to believe, that the greater part of this lake is very shallow, for there are islands in various parts of it, the nature of which, as well as its reedy shores, seem to indicate its little depth of water. The passage by which its waters reach the Caspian, is a narrow strait not exceeding two or three hundred yards in breadth, and about one-fourth of a mile long, deep enough for any ship that trades here, but having a bar without it, upon which the sea occasionally breaks. Upon the point forming the western side of this passage is situated the village of Enzellee. The villages Kaziān and Soucet occupy the other or eastern side.

The harbour, where vessels that have entered by the strait most commonly lie, is formed by an island which stretches along the inner or southern side of the western point, leaving a deep channel like a

river, of about one hundred and fifty yards broad, and of considerable length. In this, vessels may ride close to the shore, and load or unload their cargoes as safely as if they were in a dock, tier and tier, close alongside of each other, there being no need of room for swinging; so that the place, though not large, could hold an infinitely greater number of vessels than the trade of the Caspian can ever require. I believe that vessels may likewise ride at anchor near the internal mouth of the entrance, and opposite the village of Kaziān; but whether there are any other places for this purpose I could not learn; there certainly can be none better or more fitted for all purposes than those already mentioned. •

The strip of sand that divides the lake from the sea is in no place of great breadth, in some not more than a few yards across; but it is every where and at all times dry. It appears to owe its existence chiefly to the washing of the surf in high winds, and the water has every where left its marks at a surprising height above its usual level. On the eastern side of the entrance, the bank being of greater breadth, bears a good many forest trees and much thicket; but the western branch is almost entirely bare.

The village of Enzellee consists of from three to four hundred houses and shops; the greater part of which form a street or row along the harbour; this quay is at once the exchange, the bazar, and the place where all business is conducted. There is also a short double row of houses, extending at right angles to the main street from the governor's house towards the sea: but all the chief shops are confined to the quay. The khan told me that including his own household servants, with a few soldiers quartered here, there might in all be about one thousand souls in the place; among these are a few Armenians. Such is the present paltry condition of the principal, or rather the only Persian port on the Caspian Sea.

Vessels of various sizes are built at Enzellee; there was one of about one hundred and fifty tons upon the stocks* at this time, the work of which appeared to be clumsily and ill put together, the seams wide and unequal; altogether it wore an aspect of frailty that would have made a timorous sailor somewhat uneasy, had necessity

obliged him to trust his life to an Enzellee built craft. Vessels are also built at the opposite village of Kaziān. I saw one there upon the stocks, of from fifty to sixty tons; and the village is said to be equal in size and population to Enzellee, though the latter is the principal mart for foreign trade.

The boats built here are better constructed, although they have not the beauty, or perhaps the solidity of European vessels; they are of various sizes, but all alike in shape, having the stem and stern equally sharp, and pointing upwards, while the centre is considerably lower; they generally use oars, but have also a mast and sail, which carries them on at a good rate when the wind is fair; but they never use them when it is at all before the beam. Many of these craft are to be seen running along the shore, and lying in the mouths of the creeks and rivers upon the coast; and there is a certain number constantly trading between Peeree Bazar and Enzellee; the passage-money paid for a horse in one of these boats is two rupees, that of a man about one-fifth of a rupee. They are navigated by a crew of from three to six men, one of whom is looked up to as the master. Some of these boats appeared calculated to carry from ten to twelve tons, and had a half-deck, under which they could stow baggage or goods out of danger from the weather.

The khan invited me to dine with him this night; but I found that he and all the other Mahometans assembled at dinner, partook only of the light fare as usual at this season; for me they considerably provided an excellent pillaw, and sweet stew, with several other good things; among which the greatest treat was a piece of fine fresh salmon, a rarity for which I had often enquired, but never before seen. It is here called Azad-mahee, or golden fish, from the colour of its flesh; and I was informed, is hardly ever caught to the eastward of Resht, but is found in plenty on the west and north-west shores of the Caspian.

Having now seen all that was worthy of attention in Enzellee, I was desirous to return to Resht; and upon application to the governor he promised that a boat should be provided by day-light

next morning, to convey me back to Peeree Bazar. The promise was better kept than usual ; for we left Enzellee between six and seven o'clock in the morning, and reached Resht a little after noon, in spite of the miserable road, now rendered worse than before by the heavy rain which had fallen within the last two days.

CHAP. XII.

ACCIDENT TO A BOY.—CURE UNDERTAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.—PREPARATIONS FOR LEAVING RESHT.—DELAYS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.—CIVILITIES RECEIVED FROM SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS.—FURTHER DELAYS.—GRATEFUL KINDNESS OF CERTAIN PERSONS.—AUTHOR SETS OUT TO LEAVE RESHT.—IS DETAINED BY THE PRINCE'S ORDER.—ASSIGNED REASONS OF HIS DETENTION.—REMONSTRANCES—INEFFECTUAL.—SPECULATION.—PROJECTS.

MAY 25th. I had now seen all that was interesting on the Persian banks of the Caspian, and the provinces which skirt it on the southern side; and my anxiety to reach Tabreez became great, particularly as I had been able to procure no intelligence regarding the fate or motions of my countrymen in that quarter. Previous to setting out for Enzellee, I had left orders with my servants, to make arrangements for baggage-cattle to Tabreez, and was much disappointed on my return to find nothing of the kind had been effected. My friend Abdoolla Tatar, however, relieved me from this concern, by bringing to me a muleteer of that place, with whom I struck a bargain for two tomauns each beast, and we agreed to leave Resht on the next day but one.

An accident occurred this morning, which gave me an opportunity to try my skill in surgery, in a manner which afterwards raised my reputation to a troublesome height. A boy of eight or nine years old was brought into the court-yard of the hadjee's house severely wounded, and laid down with much clamour upon the ground, before the hadjee's dewankhaneh. It appeared that the boy had been passing along the street, near a butcher's shop, when the butcher, from some very trifling provocation, threw his knife, and wounded him just below the small of the back. I was attracted

by the noise, and going out to see the cause, was induced to examine the boy's wound: it was a deep stab, which bled much, but did not appear to have occasioned any serious injury. Every one was loud in execrating the perpetrator of the deed, but none seemed to think of assisting the sufferer, who lay quietly on his face bleeding profusely. At length I asked if they would permit me to treat the wound in my own way, and on this being willingly assented to, I got a piece or two of adhesive plaster, brought its sides together, and soon succeeded in stopping the blood. The hadjee, who at first took but little notice of the affair, now gave orders to have a place prepared for the boy in an empty shed; and some time after he was laid there one of his brothers came to attend to him.

The wound healed kindly by the first intention. A little stiffness and incipient inflammation were allayed by the simple application of a folded cloth steeped in cold water; and in six or seven days the boy was perfectly well. I was not aware until some time afterwards of the full extent of fame which this cure acquired for me: I then also understood that the butcher was laid hold of, and severely bastinadoed, as he deserved.

May 26th. The evening set in with heavy rain, which lasted not only all night, but till late this day. The muleteers then came in to say, that they did not mean to start next morning with the caravan, but had no objections to forward me and my baggage in advance. They however observed, that there was a dangerous river in the first day's march, which might be too high from the late rains to be passable; nor was it without reason the relater gave this caution; for it was but a day or two before that he lost his son and a horse, both carried away by the stream in attempting to cross. In spite, therefore, of my dislike to the delay of another day, it appeared but prudent, under these circumstances, to make the sacrifice, and I resolved to wait and go with the caravan.

There were by this time also symptoms of waning in the favour of my hosts. they treated me with less attention, and, at times, even with decided neglect. This evening, for instance, instead of the usual meal, they sent me for dinner the same thin fare with which they

break their own fast, namely radishes, cheese, sour milk and bread. This did not agree at all with my English stomach; so I sent to the bazar for a dish of cubabs, or roast meat cut in pieces, and a pillaw, on which my servants and I dined more sufficiently.

I experienced, however, marks of kindness and benevolence from several individuals here; particularly from the lower orders. This evening, having gone out alone to enjoy an hour's quiet saunter by the river side, and the delicious freshness which had succeeded the heavy rain, I sat down by the side of a brook, where a poor fellow came to wash a bunch of radishes for his dinner; he did not know who I was, but seeing me sit there, as he conceived, sad and forlorn, he entered into conversation with me, repeated some moral scraps of poetry, calculated to cheer me, and insisted on my taking some of his radishes, of the goodness of which he boasted much, assuring me they were all his own rearing in a garden close by. Frequently while sitting musing or sketching by the river side, I have heard persons approach, and without any impertinent or intrusive behaviour begin to speculate on who or what I might be. If they knew me, their conversation generally turned on my supposed character or business, which were sometimes very fancifully made out; they often would profess their curiosity, and wonder at the reasons which could have led me so far from home, and pity my forlorn state. Occasionally they would come up, give me a civil greeting, and entering into conversation, beg me to tell them something about Feringheestan or Europe, literally "the land of Franks," of which they seemed to have as correct an idea as of Ginnestan, or Paradise. After half an hour not unpleasantly passed, they would kindly give me the "Khodah Hafiz shumah," or, "may God protect you," and leave me to pursue my way home. I must say for the lower orders of the Gheelanees, that they have more courtesy than their superiors, and far less of that coarseness and impertinent curiosity which renders their neighbours of Mazunderān often very bad company.

May 27th. We rose, still in hopes of moving; but it soon appeared that these were vain. The head muleteer came in the morning to say, he would bring the mules, if we desired it, but that he or his

fellows could not accompany us, for the day was an unlucky one ; and the merchants whose goods he had to transport would never permit him to commence a journey on "*Do shumbeh*," Monday. He added that the river was still very large and dangerous, and as I saw any attempt at marching would be sorely against the grain, I gave it up with a good grace, and agreed to wait the chances of the next day. It was as well, for I afterwards learned that several parties, who had attempted to cross the river had been forced to return to Resht ; and had I persevered, and any accident taken place, the blame would have laid heavily at my door.

I walked again by the river side this evening to dissipate ennui ; and was joined by a very civil personage, who accosting me kindly, entered into conversation, and offered to be my guide to such places of curiosity as might be in the neighbourhood. He was a tanner and leather-dresser ; persons who are by no means held in the low estimation attached to such trades in India ; on the contrary, they are often reputable and rich tradesmen. He lived, as I found, close to the river, and knew who I was by having more than once seen me accompanied by Meerza Mahomed Reza. He first led me to an Armenian burying-ground, purchased of old by the merchants of that nation who formerly lived in Resht, but which had been abandoned on their expulsion from the city. There was still to be seen a fountain near it, over which a small summer-house was erected, once the scene of their social meetings ; but of this no vestige now remains, and the place, being considered as unholy by Mahometans, is totally neglected.

Near this place were to be seen the remains of a wall and ditch once surrounding a large garden, planted by Hedayut Khan, who formerly ruled in Gheelan with almost royal sway ; it is now quite a waste, with its fruit trees overgrown with vines and creepers, and every appearance of its former beauty gone.

My friend, the tanner, informed me of the celebrity I had gained by curing the wounded boy. He told me he had heard the boy was bleeding to death, and that no one could stop the hæmorrhage, when, after writing something upon a piece of red paper, I had applied it

to the wound, upon which the blood stopped, as if by a charm. He appeared a good deal disappointed when I told him the real state of the case.

This evening the weather, which had been fair all day, again became rainy, and threatened us with a further detention. The temperature since my arrival at Resht had been very moderate; though the heat in the sun was oppressive during most part of the day, the thermometer generally remained at 76 to 78°. Rain always produced a greater degree of coolness, sinking the mercury to 64 and 61°.

May 28. After a wet night, the day, as was dreaded, also set in rainy, and continued so till night. The rivers were so swollen by this unfortunate fall as to deprive us of all hopes of a speedy departure.

On the 29th of May the whole atmosphere was dark and gloomy; it rained heavily in the mountains, and constantly, though sometimes lightly, in town. The accounts of all the rivers were formidable; and, to add to our dismay, we were told that it sometimes continued to rain at the same rate for a month together. All the bridges on the river of Resht (which were only built of wood) were this day carried away.

May 30. Although the morning was gloomy, the sky brightened by degrees, and by noon the storm had evidently passed. We learnt that there had been a severe gale of wind at sea, which had done some damage, and forced several vessels that had sailed for Astracan back to the port of Enzellee. Our muleteer now told us, that though we might not be able to pass the river immediately, he thought it would be best to leave town, and encamp upon the bank, to take advantage of the first fall of the river.

In the afternoon I took a walk through the town, in the course of which I discovered a very neat oblong square, called the *Subzee Maidān*, one hundred and fifty yards long by one hundred broad, covered with fine green turf, and planted round with large elm trees, which gave it somewhat of an European effect. It was situated not far from the palace, and was a place of great resort for the inhabitants in its neighbourhood.

While passing through one of the streets in my way home, I was much surprised by a person running up, and addressing me with some passionately grateful exclamations, and making efforts to prostrate himself at my feet. With some difficulty I stopped him, and, on inquiry, learned that this was the butcher who had wounded my little patient, and who considered himself as indebted to me for saving him from the ill consequences that would have followed the boy's death. I could not help expressing my abhorrence at the mischievous act he had committed, for which he now appeared so contrite, though he could only explain motives to it by assuring me that the boy had used some opprobrious expressions, and that *Shy-taun* (the Devil) had induced him to throw his knife at the little fellow.

A little afterwards, two respectable looking persons came up, and, accosting me with much civility, begged me to go with them and take a cup of tea. These proved to be two relations of the butcher, but in rather better circumstances, one of them being a merchant in good trade in the bazar. They were both very thankful for their relative's escape, and wished to show their sense of it by kindness to me. I went with them accordingly, and, after taking our tea, remained to partake of a slight but very good dinner. The conversation and intercourse of these good people formed a very agreeable variety to the monotonous and lonely life I had been leading so long at my lodgings; and frequently afterwards, during my unwilling residence, I owed many hours of relief from vexation and anxiety to my acquaintance with the butcher's relations.

May the 31st. A very cold but clear night was succeeded by a bright morning. The thermometer had fallen to 57°, lower than I ever saw it before or afterwards in Gheelān. Anxiety had kept me awake for the greater part of the night, and I rose at a very early hour. We got every thing prepared for departure, but in vain. No muleteer was to be found, and we waited with restless impatience till past noon, when the old man came to tell us that his yaboos or pack-horses had gone astray in the jungle, and could not be found. What the cause of this delay really was, we could not discover; per-

haps he wished to let the river fall a little more, perhaps he did not choose to move on the jumah, or Mahometan day of rest. He comforted us, it is true, by saying that his horses would soon be caught, and that we should move this night at all events, as far as possible ; but these were false promises, and another day's delay was incurred ; a fatal delay, which involved consequences that no one could foresee.

June 1st. We rose as yesterday in the hope of departure ; but, though we were early ready, not a muleteer made his appearance till nearly eight o'clock, when, having loaded, we bade adieu, as we hoped, for ever, to the house and person of Hadjee Meer Ismael. As we passed through the bazar, a chupper or express, from Tehran came galloping past us ; but, while looking at his jaded horse and splashed figure, we little thought his errand was in any way connected with ourselves. Our party had just reached the Subzee Maidān, where the perverse muleteers were waiting for other loads, and I was champing the bit with as much impatience as my horse, when two persons came up, breathless with haste, to say that the shahzadeh desired to see me immediately, and that I must turn back with them to the palace. As I had received my leave, along with a passport in the usual form, from the prince, I was a good deal surprised at this message ; but, supposing that the express had brought letters for me from Tehran, I left my baggage and people standing in the Maidān, and went along with the messengers to the palace gate, where every thing was in a bustle that augured something extraordinary.

Cossim Khan the darogha, my old friend, came out immediately to receive me and conduct me to the inner part of the palace, close to the prince's private apartments, where I found his minister, Ahmed Khan sitting, attended by several persons in office. He soon opened the business, by informing me that he was under the necessity of requesting me to delay my journey for some time longer. I told him this was impossible ; that I had important business at Tabreez, and could not on any account delay it. He informed me it was the shahzadeh's wish, nay, his desire, that I should do so ; and

that it would be best for me to acquiesce with good will. The threat which these words implied, though it surprized and alarmed me, made no difference in my reply, which was but a repetition of what I said before. The minister then, after a pause, and premising that it was best to make me acquainted with the whole affair, gave me the following particulars, which he assured me had just arrived by the express from Tehran.

On the day after my arrival at Resht, a young man, the son of a shroff or banker in the city, had set out for Tehran, and soon after he reached that place, had met at the bath with the chief eunuch of the king's harem, with whom he had some acquaintance. This personage, always on the alert to collect gossip for his majesty, enquired of him what news there was from Resht ; the young shroff replied, there was nothing strange, except that an *Elchee Ooroos*,* Russian envoy or ambassador, had reached the city just before he left it, and had met with rather scurvy treatment : that he had first been taken to the house of Hadjee Reza, who would not receive him, and whom the young prince had consequently fined in an hundred tomauns ; that he had then been lodged in the house of Hadjee Meer Ismael, where he still remained.

The chief eunuch on his return to the palace related to the king the whole of this garbled account of my adventures, and his majesty was not a little surprized that he had no accounts of such an event as the arrival of a Russian envoy ; particularly as it appears there really was at this time some talk of a Russian consul coming to reside at Enzellee. He therefore, when his sons came to salute him in the morning, sharply rebuked Mahomed Reza Meerza, the prince of Resht, for not having informed him of the circumstance ; and on finding him equally amazed and ignorant as himself, he upbraided the prince with his want of information and careless system of government.

The prince, confounded at all he had heard,* immediately on leaving the durbar dispatched an express to his brother at Resht, to

* Russian, in the Persian tongue, is pronounced *Ooroos*.

learn the truth of the matter, upbraiding him in his turn with careless administration in his (the elder prince's) absence. This express was the chupper just arrived ; and the minister informed me, that the young shahzadeh was so much hurt at his brother's reproaches, that he had resolved on detaining me at Resht until that brother should arrive, and be convinced of his injustice. I was therefore requested to return to my lodgings, and put off my journey until the return of prince Mahomed Reza Meerza, which was expected in twelve or fourteen days.

Whatever might be the truth in whole or in part of this statement, the hardship and mortification of so extravagant a delay under my peculiar circumstances, were so great, that I told the minister at once it was impossible I could submit to it ; that my private affairs might be injured by it in a way which the prince could never compensate, should he even wish to do so. That I was an English subject, in possession of passports from the minister of my own country at the court of Tehran, and from several of the Persian princes, whose courts I had visited ; and that having committed no fault within the Persian dominions, his master could not with any pretensions to justice detain me against my will. The minister continued to reason with me ; and representing to me, as he said, the matter over and over again, in all its bearings, tried to reconcile me to the delay ; first, by the hope of its being short ; then by the assurance of its being inevitable. We both stuck to our points, and at last I plainly told him, that having produced my papers, and offered to permit copies of them to be forwarded to Tehran for the satisfaction of his majesty and the prince, I had done all that was proper on my part ; that nothing now should detain me but positive force. He replied, that if this was the case, my baggage should be stopped, and myself forced to remain ; I said that I could of course offer no resistance to force, and should in that case consider myself as his prisoner. The minister then conversed for a time with those about him, and, dispatching a messenger, begged me to sit down for a little, as he had sent for Meérza Reza, my friend, who would perhaps

explain matters better to me, and reconcile me to what could not be avoided.

When the business had been explained to the Meerza, I addressed him in English, observing, that he must see how unreasonable it was to expect that I should, on account of a silly mistake, propagated by a thoughtless lad, put off my journey, which had already been delayed many days ; that the passports I had produced, were sufficient proofs of my being an English subject ; and that if any thing additional were required, he was enough acquainted with English manners and the English language to witness for the truth of what the papers proclaimed. I added, that copies of these papers were quite sufficient to serve all the prince's purposes, if indeed they were only to excuse himself to his brother, without committing the arbitrary and tyrannical act of detaining an harmless English traveller, to his severe loss ; I repeated that I was determined not to submit to this but by force, and warned the minister, on the part of his master, to be careful of incurring the consequences that might result from such a violation of the friendly relations which existed between the two countries ; for that I should certainly make serious complaints to the king through our minister, if the violence now threatened should be actually committed.

The Meerza spoke long to the minister, who was evidently perplexed, and once or twice went into the prince's apartment, as if to receive his orders ; but whether it was the prince or the minister himself who desired to detain me, the effect was the same : I was still informed, that my journey must be put off. At last the minister requested me to write a few lines to any one at Tehran, declaring who I was, and which might contain any other information I had to give. This he assured me should be instantly forwarded to that place ; and under the impression that it was proposed as a condition of releasing me from their embargo, I willingly complied, writing to a servant of the resident an account of what had befallen me, and on the superscription requesting any one who could read English to make it known, not only to the servant to whom it was addressed, but to any English gentleman residing in the kingdom. But when this

had been done, I found that it was merely intended for the king's satisfaction, and that my detention was as much decided on as ever.

Greatly irritated at the deception which had thus been practised on me, I resisted all the persuasion and endless repetition of arguments, which appeared to be pressed upon me only to gain time. I still announced my determined resolution to depart, and seconded my words by action. I rose abruptly; said "Khodah Hafiz,*" to the assembly, and in spite of the numerous voices raised to forbid my moving, left the place, and walked towards the gate, where my horses were still standing. I had seen a messenger precede me to the gate, and upon coming up to my people, found orders had been given not to let any thing move; but, determined to put this to the proof, I proceeded to mount my horse, and had just put my foot into the stirrup, when an attendant came up, and with no very gentle action snatched the bridle out of my hands, pulling the horse at the same time away from me, and keeping hold of him, as if to prevent a repetition of the attempt on my part.

Just at this time I was informed that the prince had come out, and that Meerza Reza, who had gone to see him, wished to speak to me. Being still desirous of settling matters in an amicable way, and rather sanguine as to the result of a serious application to the Prince, by a person so able as the Meerza to explain how matters really stood, I returned to the hall of audience, and found they were only then going to see the prince: to my mortification, and that of the Meerza, they returned unsuccessful; the prince persisted in ordering me to be detained at all hazards. Again I urged the papers I had, and all my former arguments; I even entrusted them with the Meerza for the prince's inspection: the result was the same. When the Meerza said, that I was determined not to be detained except by force, "Well," said this head-strong young man, "by force let it be." I hinted to the Meerza that I would leave my servants

* "May God protect you," is the usual form of taking leave in Persia upon all occasions.

and baggage, and proceed to Tabreez alone on foot. "They will stop you," said he "by force, and confine you closely; which as yet they think unnecessary; besides, without a guide how would you find your way through the intricacies of this country? how proceed, unmolested by the police, or even by thieves?" He was in the right, and I was forced to submit. I accordingly told the minister that I considered myself his prisoner, and would go where he should direct. "Our prisoner!" said he, with something of a sneer; "No! our much honoured guest, only to remain and taste the hospitality of our prince; you have no notion what a fine prince he is; you will be delighted at having remained to see him."

It may be thought by some people that the tone I assumed on this occasion was imprudent, or even disrespectful, and that I should have succeeded better if I had endeavoured to gain my point, as I should have done in any other country, by mildness and patience; but those who know the Persians, and indeed Asiatics in general, must be aware, that firmness and decision, accompanied occasionally with a degree of vehemence, will more often succeed with them than gentleness and patience, which they invariably attribute to a sense of weakness. Thus, independently of the indignation I felt at the attempt of these people to place restraint upon the subject of a nation which even their king views with high respect, I really believed that it only required a little firmness to bring them to reason, and regain my own liberty. I may have been wrong, but I acted for the best.

Before quitting the minister's presence, I warned him that all my property, in baggage and horses, were now at the prince's risk and charge; that hitherto I had myself paid for their keep, and the maintenance of myself and servants, (although this had nominally been furnished for me by the prince,) but this henceforth I could not do; that he must provide provisions of all sorts, otherwise both they and we should starve on their hands. "Oh," said he, "have no care on that score, you will be magnificently treated, depend upon it." He then ordered Cossim Khan, the darogha, to conduct me back to my old quarters, at Hadjee Meer Ismael's, where he left

me, sore against the will of its inhabitants, to my own indignant and gloomy reflections.

I had indeed sufficient subject for bitter mortification, nor was my situation void of cause for alarm. Many private reasons of the last importance, united with those which I have mentioned as regarding the fate of my friends at Tehran, to sharpen my anxiety for reaching Tabreez. The various and excessive delays I had met with at different periods of my journey, had rendered it a matter of consequence to me that I should reach a point where I might hope to receive letters from Europe ; so that the vexation of a fresh detention of indefinite length, so near the goal, was inexpressibly severe. Besides, though the minister had declared to me that the events he had related were the sole cause of my detention, how could I be sure that this was in reality the case? Had the object been merely to prove to the king and prince that I was not a Russian, the papers I produced were sufficient for that purpose ; it was evident my own presence could prove nothing more. But of these they took little notice ; they did not even take copies, to forward to Tehran. It was hardly to be believed, that the young prince, however thoughtless, would from mere wantonness venture to commit an open act of violence towards the subject of a friendly nation ; warned as he was by the Meerza and myself, and counselled as he no doubt must have been by his minister, an elderly, and probably an experienced person. The inference upon the whole was, that some secret orders had been received, and that reasons of policy or precaution had occasioned my arrest.

The great dislike which the king had always evinced to allow Europeans of any nation to enter Khorasān, or attempt to explore the countries to the east of Irāk, naturally occurred to my mind. The fate of Mr. Brown, also, the celebrated African traveller, who was murdered a few years before on the banks of the Kizzilozun, certainly by this very king's desire, on his way towards Khorasān ; and that of the French officers said to have suffered in a similar manner by the royal orders, while travelling in that remote province, fur-

nished sufficient evidence of the dangerous nature of the ground on which I stood at this critical moment.

His majesty had, undoubtedly, heard of the course I had taken through his dominions, and might probably have conceived some cause of alarm from my visit to the Koordish States of Khorazān, my anxiety to reach Bockhara, or even from my visit to Mushed. In the spirit of Asiatic jealousy, he might fear I had seen too much, or that I might be in possession of information dangerous to the safety of his dominions, and he might have resolved I should never carry it beyond them. The reports I had heard at Saree and Balfroosh regarding the departure of M. Willock, and the king's displeasure towards that gentleman, now recurred with double force to my recollection; and I could not doubt, that the cause of my present imprisonment was connected with those events; how it might ultimately affect my life or liberty it was impossible to conjecture, but the prospect at the time was certainly not consolatory. There was, however, nothing immediately to be done, but to wait with as much patience as possible the events of a few days, and be guided by circumstances as to my future conduct.

I found my confinement, for the present at least, was not intended to be strict: that the liberty of walking about the town was to be permitted me; they probably trusted much to the impracticability of the country, as an insurmountable obstacle against any attempt on my part to escape: but I soon discovered I was watched, and could not stray far, without incurring the risk of being checked, nor was I to be allowed a horse upon any condition. I availed myself of this partial liberty, in the evening, to visit Meerza Reza, and to consult with him as to what steps should be taken.

If I might trust in the meerza's assurances, he had returned to the prince after I left the palace, and repeated his remonstrances; urging, that from his own knowledge of the mode in which the English had constantly been caressed in Persia, the King would not fail of being highly displeased at the treatment which had been offered to me, and repeated every argument he could think of, calculated to

alter his purpose, but without effect : the prince even abused him for his interference, and cautioned him to say no more on the subject on pain of punishment to himself. It appeared from this, that there was no remedy but to submit ; and wait until the elder prince should arrive, or till some order upon the subject should be received from Tehran. That no step, however, might be omitted likely to produce a good effect, we thought it might be advisable to write an airzee or petition to the prince, stating in clear terms to him the severe loss and distress to which the orders he had issued would subject me ; and the very unfavourable appearance which the business must bear when represented to the king, especially when it should be proved that the prince was perfectly aware of my being no Russian : finally, to state my belief that the whole affair originated in a mistake of his servants ; and to pray, that he should rectify it, by giving orders for my immediate release. This petition we proposed to deliver to the prince by the hands of my friend the daee, his uncle, on whom I meant to call next morning, with the intention of requesting his kind influence and advice.

CHAP. XIII.

TRAIT OF THE YOUNG PRINCE. — VISIT FROM THE PRINCE'S UNCLE. — AUTHOR'S NEGOTIATIONS FOR RELEASE. — SPECULATIONS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE. — CONSULTS HADJEE MOOLLA BABA ON THE SUBJECT. — ATTEMPTS TO PROCURE TWO OF HIS OWN HORSES. — FAILS. — FURTHER CONSULTATIONS. — OTHER INEFFECTUAL PROJECTS AND NEGOCIATIONS. — OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF ESCAPE.

JUNE 2d. I learned this day, from one of my host's family who came to condole with me on my mishaps, that an express had been sent the day before to Tehran, with accounts of what had taken place. The young prince would not send one of his own or his brother's horses, but ordered his vizier Ahmed Khan to provide as he best could, a strong active horse for the journey: none could be had except by purchase, and at last a fitting steed was offered and accepted; but after dispatching the messenger upon it, a great deal of haggling took place about the price, which even yet remained unsettled; a brother of our host's, called Hadjee Ibrahim, had been, by some means, forced to pay a portion of the cost, and would, in all probability, have to suffer for the whole.

After waiting in vain for a Persian writer to make out my petition, I sent Seyed Allee to the daee, to find out when it might be convenient for him to receive a visit from me: a message was returned, to say that the daee had himself been anxious to see me, and meant to anticipate my visit by coming to my lodging in about an hour from that time. He came accordingly, and was so gracious and kind in his demeanour, that I lost no time in stating to him the hardship of my case; and requesting him to use his interest with the prince, for permission to depart without further delay. His answer, though kind, was much in the same strain as the argu-

ments that had been used before : he assured me no ill was at all intended me ; on the contrary, all was done in kindness, and for my honor : that when the prince came, I should be dismissed with kheluts, my expences paid, and all sorts of favours bestowed upon me. To this I replied, that if a man is to be put to death, it is of little consequence to him whether the hand that deals the blow be that of friend or foe : that the rankest hostility could not do me more serious mischief than was inflicted by this pretended friendship : that true kindness would permit me to judge and act for myself, and not control my liberty in the suspicious manner I had now to complain of. I finished, by repeating over to him every argument I had used to the minister, in language as forcible as I could find terms for ; intreating him to use his influence with the prince for my liberty, as the only favour I desired at his hands. The daee acquiesced in the hardship of my case, and appeared convinced by the force of my arguments ; he promised to speak to the prince in my behalf, and desired that my servant should come in the evening to his lodgings, to learn the result of his application. He then took leave in so gracious a manner, and seemed so confident of being able to obtain redress for me by a fair representation, that he left me almost sanguine in the hope of speedy relief.

These hopes were but the prelude to more disappointments. In the evening my servant went, and returned with the daee's compliments and regrets ; he had spoken with his nephew, who had lent a deaf ear to all his remonstrances ; swearing by his father's head that he could not possibly permit me to leave Resht, at all events, until the return of his brother, who was not expected for a fortnight at least. This disappointment led me to think more seriously of a project which had occurred to me the night before, but which on canvassing with the meerza, we had for the time abandoned as too replete with difficulty ; this was to leave my baggage and servants, and make my own escape, if possible, to the upper country, and from thence to reach Tabreez, where I had no doubt of being able to negotiate for all I should have abandoned in my flight. I had not, however, formed any plan for this flight, and before doing so,

I resolved once more to see the daee, and learn if he conceived there was absolutely no hope of influencing the prince to juster measures. I went therefore in the evening, and was immediately admitted ; but I saw at once, from his manner, that the thing was out of the question. He appeared himself ready to curse the prince's obstinacy, and gave it as his opinion, that he was a self-willed headstrong boy, with whom there was no arguing, and that the only remedy he saw was patience. Whatever deceit or double-dealing there might be in the conduct of the other members of the court, I felt inclined to place full confidence in this nobleman, from his simplicity of manner, perhaps, too, from his kindness of expression towards myself ; but it was clear, both from the way in which he spoke of the prince and his minister, as well as from the report of other persons, that he by no means enjoyed much of the prince's confidence, or exercised any influence over him. I left him more determined than before my visit to attempt flight, if possible with any reasonable prospect of success.

It is not unlikely the prudence of my conduct may in this place be called in question, and that I may be blamed for even thinking of so desperate a step, at so early a stage of my confinement ; nor can I now deny that there is some reason for such reflections, and that possibly, in moments of greater coolness and deliberation I might have acted otherwise ; but at the time I not only felt that a detention of indefinite length was in itself an intolerable evil, but believed my personal safety was really in danger ; and only, if at all, to be secured, by reaching Azerbaijan, where, even if my English friends should have left the place, I should probably have it in my power to throw myself on the protection of the Russian, or any other European ambassador who might be at the court of Abbas Meerza. It is easy to reason afterwards on what should or might have been done in cases of difficulty, but a thousand circumstances may happen at the trying moment to warp or mislead the judgment of those most concerned in their issue.

When alone, I resolved many schemes to put my project into execution ; but all were attended with great difficulty ; and all in-

volved the necessity of having a guide. I knew that my horses were sent along with those of the prince's, to feed in a meadow not far off, where they were picketed at night under guard of the royal jelloodars.* If it were possible to get hold of two of them about night-fall, I thought it would materially aid me, as my servant and I could then, by morning, be far on our way to Azerbaijan. If the horses were not to be got, I calculated the chances of trying it on foot. If I could get clear of the town, I thought in the early part of the night I should probably have from twelve to fourteen hours start of my pursuers, before they were aware of my escape; by which time I should at all events be from thirty-five to forty miles distant, and before they could come up with me, might have travelled fifty or sixty, which would nearly see me out of Gheelān. From the first villages of Azerbaijan, where the influence of the princes of Gheelān might be supposed to cease, I proposed to hire horses or mules, and so proceed from village to village to Tabreez. But the road to Fomen, from whence a pass ascends the mountains, is so intricate, that without a guide no hope of success was to be entertained; but how was I to get a guide in a country where I could expect no great favour, and where terror of the prince's wrath would hinder the natives from yielding me any assistance?

I had made a very pleasant acquaintance in the person of one Hadjee Moolla Baba, a respectable merchant, with whom my friend the meerza lived, and who had all along been most kind and hospitable to me. He was a native of Tabreez, though, in consequence of his commercial relations, long an inhabitant of Resht. As the former, I thought it likely he would be less in awe of the young prince, particularly as I knew that he had more than one cause of disgust at both brothers†, and I thought, from his former kindness, he might be disposed to do me a service, which, perhaps, some of

* This term, derived from Jelow, a bridle rein, is applied to those servants who are employed in the superior offices about the stables, and who ride after their master as his attendant upon horseback. A common groom is called *Mehter* in Persian.

† The elder prince forced him to pay up near 10,000 tomanes on the pretence of arrears due while the hadjee held the farm of the customs in Gheelan.

my English friends might have it in their power to repay to his family in Tabreez. At all events, should he betray me, I could not be much worse off than I was ; so to the hadjee and Meerza Reza I determined to communicate my plan of flight, and with this intention I went there early in the evening.

The good hadjee, as I expected, lent a ready ear to my complaints ; and entered readily into my projects, promising to assist me with a guide, if possible, that very night ; so that after a short consultation with him, in which he assured me, that if successful in his endeavours he would send to let me know, I left him, and went home to prepare my own servants for their different parts, and myself for the decided step I was about to take.

My servants, the Persians at least, were unfortunately weak and timid people, who, from fear of consequences to themselves, were not likely to assist me heartily ; much explanation and persuasion were necessary to bring them to any degree of tranquillity. They dreaded the effects to themselves of the explosion that would doubtless take place upon my flight being discovered ; even being left alone by me, in so strange and hostile a place, had to them nameless horrors, independent of their dread of the prince's anger. I endeavoured to re-assure them, by reminding them, that if I succeeded in escaping, the certainty of being called to account would make the prince and his ministers cautious of injuring my people or property ; and that the danger to them was greater while I remained a prisoner ; for, should any thing happen to me, it was certain they would lose all their property, if not their lives, that those in fault might rest secure upon the principle of dead men telling no tales. These, and similar arguments prevailed, so far at least as to silence opposition ; it was arranged that Seyed Allee was to accompany me in my flight, that John, my negro servant, with Cossim and the groom, should remain in charge of the baggage, and should endeavour to conceal my departure as long as possible, by reporting me sick in case of visitors, and desirous of being left undisturbed. I took a small supply of money, my sword, a double-barrelled pistol, and a little bread, and having put on a light dress for walking, I

remained waiting in great anxiety for my friend the hadjee's message, and the time appropriated for action.

Several hours thus elapsed, and at length Seyed Allee, who had been sent to attempt seizing the horses, returned, saying, that the prince's jelloodars who slept among them, were all too much on the alert to admit of any attempt of the kind; and a little after, a message came from the hadjee to tell me that he had been disappointed of seeing the person he intended as my guide, and that I had better put off my proposed departure, at all events, till the next night. After all our preparations, and so much intense excitement, this was a painful check to my hopes; but I cheered myself with believing that the time of deliverance was only a little deferred, and that the next day would see my project successful.

June 3d. Seyed Allee, whom I sent again upon the scout to see how far an attempt upon the horses might be practicable, returned with a very discouraging account. The head jelloodar abused him and the groom, for endeavouring to get away the large Toorkoman horse, upon pretence of carrying him to me, to show me his feet. They allowed them, it seems, to graze at large during the day, but placed them at night among the prince's horses, guarding all very strictly. Thus there remained no hope of obtaining the assistance of my horses on the way.

In the evening I learnt from the hadjee that he had been quite unsuccessful in his endeavours to find me a guide. The man on whom he had at first relied, had left Resht, and every other person was too much afraid of consequences to accept the office; he despaired for the present, at least, of procuring one on any terms. We then discussed the possibility of my finding out the way to the Mas-souleh pass by myself; but upon due consideration, it was abandoned as impracticable; for both the hadjee and meerza said it was so intricate as to require a very experienced guide to travel it by night. Another idea occurred to us; it was proposed that I should apply, through my friend the daee, for permission to send a servant to Tabreez on horseback, to acquaint my friends of my existence and situation. Should this be granted, a passport would doubtless be

given, and I might contrive to personate the servant myself; at all events, it would prove the means of conveying an account of my unpleasant predicament to my friends; and likewise prove, that nothing very serious was intended against my person or property. It was not, however, possible to attempt this plan immediately, as the daee was absent; and my hopes were ebbing fast, when a new thought struck me, and I immediately set about trying its practicability.

A few days previous to the commencement of my detention, I had met a little Hindoo seyed, whom I had known at Sheeraz. He was there as the companion of Meërza Baukher, whom I had employed in my service, but who, turning out a rogue, had been dismissed at Tehran. This seyed found that he also had been cheated by my Sheeraz friend, and had complained of him grievously, so that I had no reason to suspect any collusion between them. I now thought that the little man, being a stranger, and not known to have any connection with me, might be rendered useful in procuring horses and guides to Tabrecz. The plan I proposed was, that he should hire a guide, with two ponies, as for himself and a companion, to be ready some night at the Subzee Maidān, where I might join him, and thus be far from pursuit before the alarm could be given.

I sent immediately for the little seyed, but he kept me waiting for several hours in great anxiety; and it was late at night when he came. I cannot express the pain of these feverish hours of irritation and suspense, which at this time rapidly succeeded each other; only to be checked by the misery of disappointed hope. I was restless and uneasy; and could not sleep; for all my thoughts were directed to discover the means of shortening my vexatious confinement, whatever the consequences might be. The seyed came at last, and on hearing my plans, promised to assist and accompany me if possible; so I went once more to my sleepless couch, cheered by this fresh gleam of hope.

June 4th. I sent my servant to rouse the little seyed betimes, that the necessary enquiries might be early made, and all prepared, if possible, for the evening. In the course of the forenoon, however,

I learnt that the seyed had been at all the different places where guides and horses were usually to be obtained, without success ; that a few persons had come from Massouleh the day before with wheat, and meant to return there the day after to their own homes, that these were the only carriers at present to be found, and on them no dependence was to be placed. Thus my hope was again quelled for the day, and Seyed Allee put an end to it effectually, by informing me that the little seyed was so timid and indolent, if not cold in the service, that it was useless to place any reliance on him.

In the evening my friend Meerza Mahomed Allee, the butcher's relation, came kindly to see me ; and with the view to dissipate my *dil tungee* (literally " constriction of the heart"), as he said, insisted on my coming to walk by the river side with himself and a friend, and invited me to dine with them afterwards. They had heard all about my detention, and the prince's conduct ; and though they could in no way assist me, scrupled not to express their abhorrence, and predicted that both the prince and Ahmed Khan, the vizier, whom they characterised as a low but overbearing upstart, would some day suffer for their behaviour towards me. The considerate attention of these people, unaltered by circumstances, however fortune might seem to frown on me, was most gratifying ; and it had, as they kindly intended, no inconsiderable effect at the time in alleviating my vexations, and making many of my hours pass less heavily.

On the previous day I had been forced to complain against Hadjee Meer Ismael's servants for general disrespect, and for neglecting to furnish my servants and myself with a sufficient quantity of victuals. This inattention had been going on for some time ; but I found slight hints produced no effect. A serious complaint, however, now wrought a wonderful change in their behaviour ; and all was plenty and respect. I had, indeed, frequent occasion to observe that patience and forbearance, those valuable qualities in Europe, are not only thrown away in Persia, but rather lead to their possessor's loss. If a man voluntarily assumes an unpretending position in society, if he takes for example a low seat in an assembly, this very

act of diffidence, instead of raising him in their eyes, only marks the degree of estimation in which he is to be held in future; and the more he yields, the more he is trampled on; while fools, with greater impudence, are admitted to the high places, upon the credit of their own pretensions. A bold assertion of superiority is seldom questioned, and is the only means in a stranger's power of obtaining respect. May not the wide discrepancy observable in this respect, as in many others, between the social habits of the east and west, be referred to the difference in principle and doctrine, between the religions professed respectively in these countries?

June 5th. This day was passed in fruitless negotiations with Cossim Khan, the darogha, and Ahmed Khan, the minister, for engaging them to obtain the prince's leave to send a servant to Tabreez. No attention whatever was paid to my messages. I sent for the Hindoo seyd to see if he could not persuade the Massouleh muleteers to set off this night. He returned unsuccessful, as he said, but informed me, that a native of Hamadān, then in the town, had consented to be our guide, provided we purchased two ponies (his own, no doubt) for the journey. This was clearly a put-off, and I remarked to him, that in the first place I had not a sufficiency of money to purchase the ponies, nor could I, in the second place, see how this measure was to facilitate our proceedings; for, as the guide was not to ride either of the beasts, he could, and probably would, if well paid, do his duty just as well if we all went on foot. I therefore begged him to settle the matter without more delay. But it was evident the undertaking was not at all to my little friend's taste; on the contrary, he even thought fit seriously to advise me against any attempt at flight; and though, upon my rejecting this counsel with a good deal of displeasure, he left me with assurances of his devotion, I became convinced that there was nothing to be hoped for in this quarter; and was neither surprised nor much disappointed at finding he returned to me no more.

I spent the evening in consultation with my friends Hadjee Moolla Baba and Meerza Reza, who were always ready to comfort and amuse me when it was in their power. The meerza contributed to this not

inconsiderably, by lending me one or two English books from his small collection, amongst which I found Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Pope's *Homer's Iliad*, and Vince's *Astronomy*. It certainly implies considerable quickness and mental capacity in him to have mastered the English language in two or three years sufficiently to taste the beauties of the first, and to comprehend the science of the last ; and it was a strange, though gratifying circumstance, to find these noble specimens of English literature in a quarter so remote. I believe I may say with truth, that the first time I ever read Milton, and Pope's *Homer*, regularly through from end to end, was on the banks of the Caspian Sea.

June 6th. The prince's uncle having arrived the day before, I waited on him to request his influence with the prince for permission to send a servant to Tabreez. He received me as kindly as usual, and promised to try whether this could be allowed. The tone of his conversation was quite the same as before, lamenting the prince's obstinacy and the injustice of my detention, which, he assured me, would soon be terminated by the arrival of the elder brother ; and he advised me to wait quietly for this event, without any further effort or negociation with the thoughtless boy who at this time held the reins of government. This was not the only quarter from which I heard the probability of the prince's early arrival. It was rumoured that he would enter Resht in five or six days at farthest, and I began to think, if this were true, that it would be wiser in me to remain, and run the risk of what might happen to me on his arrival, than attempt a flight, and risk the consequence of a recapture.

The obstacles in the way of such an attempt were indeed sufficient to account for my reluctance at having recourse to this measure. I have already more than once adverted to the extreme impracticability of the country, and the intricacy of its cross-roads, which were such as to forbid all hope of making our way through them without an experienced guide. To attempt the great and direct road would be equal folly ; for at all the principal villages upon it, at the several bazars, and on the banks of every considerable

stream, there are established rahdars or police posts, who challenge every passenger; and government officers, gholaums, and messengers belonging to the court, are continually passing and repassing. There are, besides, two deep and rapid rivers, only fordable in the driest weather, and even then with difficulty; at other times they are crossed by ferries established on the line of the highway. As the road approaches the foot of the mountains, it lies almost in the bed of one of these streams, crossing and recrossing twelve or fourteen times, among deep pools and currents, where a guide is absolutely indispensable. It also passes through the populous town and bazar of Fomen, which must at all hazards be avoided; a precaution which a stranger would find it impossible to take, from the intricacy of the bye-paths. After this, the road winds for many miles through a dense jungle, without any certain track, each party shifting for themselves, and scrambling through deep clay and brushwood, partly under water, in a manner that, even in the day-time, requires an accurate acquaintance with its intricacies; yet, if an attempt at escape should be resolved upon, all this must be traversed in the dark, by persons ignorant even of the general direction of their route. To crown all, though a companion to assist in the undertaking would be absolutely necessary, because my own tongue would betray me in the first inquiries I should attempt to make, yet what companion could I command? A Persian servant, a coward by nature, who trembled exceedingly at the name of every prince of the royal family; who, if detected in disobeying their orders, would remain for ever exposed to their vengeance, and to whom nothing I could offer could ever compensate for the risk he might run in attempting to assist me; whom, therefore, though professing his willingness to accompany me, it was no wonder to find opposing in secret, and dissuading me by counsel from what he considered a most hazardous attempt.

When the situation of things which I have above described is considered, it will no longer be wondered at that I should pause in adopting so desperate a resolution, and prefer abiding by the decision of the elder prince, whatever risk that step might involve, pro-

vided his arrival were really to take place, as at this time expected, in less than a week.

Having thus resolved, and shaken off the feverish anxiety which had harassed me for many days past, during the succession of abortive plans for escape, I enjoyed some degree of calm, and passed several days quietly in arranging my astronomical observations, reading the meerza's books, and in walking occasionally along the banks of the river, on the skirts of the town.

CHAP. XIV.

DISEASES OF GHEELAN. — VARIOUS DEPARTMENT OF SICK PERSONS APPLYING TO THE AUTHOR FOR ADVICE. — REPORT OF THE PRINCE'S APPROACH, AND CONSEQUENT SEIZURE OF HORSES FOR HIS SERVICE. — A MAN WOUNDED AND BROUGHT TO BE CURED BY THE AUTHOR. — VARIOUS REPORTS OF THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS. — FURTHER FRUITLESS ATTEMPTS AT ESCAPING.

JUNE 8. Ever since my celebrated case of the boy stabbed by the butcher, I had been beset by crowds of invalids, seeking advice and medicines to cure their several ailments. As most of these were affected by chronic complaints, old sores*, diseased bones, swellings,

* I observed here one or two complaints that appeared to be peculiar to the low country; one of these was a very malignant and inveterate cutaneous disorder, which prevailed not only among the lower, but among the better classes, and to which I could not learn that they were in the habit of applying any remedy. I have seen many children reduced to most deplorable objects by this disease, but the parents never dreamt of making any effort towards a cure. To some who applied to me for advice, I recommended the common remedy of brimstone, but they declined using it. No one, indeed, attaches any idea of disgrace to this disease, or to being infested with vermin, with which the greater number of all ranks swarm, to such a degree that I found the utmost difficulty in keeping myself clear. Both these afflictions arise from dirt, the reproach of which, in spite of the frequent use of the bath, most Persians are liable to, and Gheelances by no means least of any.

Another very common disease, is a sort of joint-evil, by which the patient suffers the loss of his toes and fingers, one after another, as in joint-leprosy. I do not, however, think it is the same, for the countenance has not the swelled and leprous appearance which is, I believe, a constant attendant on that dreadful malady. Other cutaneous disorders, as ring-worms, tetters, &c. are also very common.

Gmelin mentions the small-pox as frequently visiting Gheelan. It is said to be brought by, or generally consequent upon, a particular wind which blows from the south; and it remains epidemic from six to twelve months, after which its virulence relaxes, and it gradually disappears. He adds, that inoculation has been practised in the province from time immemorial. They choose the virus from a person who has been slightly affected, and insert it in both hands and feet, binding the wounds to keep them from the

rheumatisms, and ruptures of long standing, it was far beyond my ability to assist them ; nor did my limited stock of medicines permit of my doing as much as I could have wished. Being uncertain how much or how long they might be required, I was forced to economize.

But it was curious to mark the difference of conduct in the various applicants ; some poor creatures would advance with timidity, and beg, for the sake of God, that I would do something to cure them ; that they knew my ability, and hoped I would not send them away disappointed. The greater number, on the other hand, came forward as if they had a right to my services, as if I had been sent there only to attend to their behests, and that, in demanding my assistance, they claimed only their due.

Many people entered my apartment without leave asked or given, took a seat without ceremony, and began their business without the least preamble. "Salaam Aleickoom ! Kodah Hafiz ! This is " my son, my brother, my nephew, or my friend, he is sick ; his " complaint is so and so, and the symptoms are as follow ; what " must he do to be cured ?" They then proceeded in the most summary manner to strip off his clothes to show me the nature or the situation of the malady. This unceremonious method of proceeding I found it necessary to check in a decided way, and ge-

air for a few days, after which the process is left to be completed by nature, and is generally quite successful.

But of all petitioners for my assistance, the ladies were, I think, the most numerous, and those whom I could least serve ; indeed, their cases were seldom of a nature in which I could be of any use, although I was sometimes prevailed upon to visit them, and listen to their sorrows. They generally received me in such a situation, that a door or curtain was between us, from behind which the hand could be thrust, if necessary, to feel the pulse ; and they would explain their cases with a freedom of expression that often gave me astonishment. I had several curious adventures of this sort ; and once was sent for by the wife of mine host the hadjee, who was perfectly informed of the circumstance. It was mortifying to me, that I could seldom be of service ; and I believe, had I played the quack a little more, and given hopes and physic in greater quantities, I should have pleased my patients better.

nerally sent such sturdy patients and their leaders away, looking foolish enough.

On the evening of this day, as I was taking a walk by the river side, two respectable looking persons, in the dress of moollahs, came up, and, after remarking to each other with a nod, "Yes, that is he;" abruptly, and in an authoritative tone, inquired of me, "Are you a surgeon?" I gave no reply, but stared them in the face; on which the question was repeated. A person who was standing near came up and said, "You mistake; he is no surgeon; he is an elchee." "Yes, yes," said they, "we know that he is an elchee, but he is likewise a surgeon, a very clever fellow, and I require his assistance: I am a moollah and a seyed." I now turned to him, and, with a stern voice, asked him what might be the meaning of so much rudeness? but he, never heeding, went on, "Yes, I know that you are skilled in surgery, and I want you to look at my mouth. See! the gums have all left my teeth; what must I do for this?" and thereupon opening a large mouthful of long black and yellow fangs, he thrust it and its contents, no inviting object, towards my face. Drawing back, I coldly told him that I was no surgeon, and if I were, such rude conduct was not likely to secure my assistance, which, he might depend upon it, he should not have. On this, mistaking my meaning, they said to one another, "Oh, he wishes us to come to his munzil*; he will not prescribe here." "Neither here nor at my munzil, nor in any place, shall I do any thing for such unmannerly *yaboos* as you are," said I, turning my back upon them; on which my friends, with a vacant vulgar laugh, moved off sheepishly enough.

The by-stander who had before spoken, now politely addressed me in an apologetic tone, begging me to think nothing of their incivility; that they were truly what I had called them, *yaboos*, and had no idea of asking a favour in a proper manner. I replied, that although I was not a medical man, I was far from unwilling to render such aid as might be in my power, to the poor for the sake of God,

* Lodging, place of abode.

or to any who requested it as a favour, but that I never would be prevailed upon to give the least assistance to those, who, fancying themselves persons of importance, thought fit to demand it in the tone we had just heard. I was not sorry, after what had happened, to give this explanation at the time, and I found afterwards it had not been lost.

June 9th. This morning the town was thrown into a great bustle, by the arrival of an express from Tehran, with intelligence that the prince had left that place three days before, and would be at Resht on the 11th or 12th instant. The young prince immediately prepared to meet his brother at Roodbār, about three marches distant, on the way to Casveen ; and he left the town accordingly about two o'clock.

This movement was the signal for a very characteristic scene of turbulence, violence, and oppression. There were not horses enough for the prince's accommodation, and an order was given to seize every animal that could be found in the caravanseries or bazars. The town became immediately filled with riot and confusion ; one might have thought that an enemy had entered, and that pillage had commenced : men were seen every now and then flying away upon their ponies, pursued by others striving to overtake and seize them. Screams, groans, and imprecations, were heard on all hands, as seizures were made, or as the prince's people were baffled ; many a poor wretch lost his beast, the sole dependence of himself and family ; for there are many here who live by carrying wood, charcoal, and such things about the town on yaboos. The hadjee, my host, who had just returned from the country, was sitting in conversation with me, when a poor fellow rushed into the court, crying " Amaun ! amaun !" and uttering the most melancholy complaints. They had seized his only yaboo, he said : they were carrying it, God knows where, where it might be lost or killed, where he should never see it more ; and he could not leave his business and family to go along with it ! The hadjee knew the man's necessity, and sent immediately to attempt the release of his poney, but in vain ; the court menial who had seized it, would

not give up his prey, and the poor wretch went away weeping aloud with despair.

By and by came in another plundered wretch, under similar circumstances, making a loud complaint to Cossim Khan, the darogha, who was sitting at the bazar with Hadjee Moolla Baba and myself, at the shop of the latter. Moved by his piercing lamentations, the darogha went himself to negotiate for the beast's release, but with no better success, and the poor man was forced to endure its loss, perhaps for ever; for it often happens that horses thus seized are never heard of more; or if they are, it is only when the owners can follow their property, and watch the time when, from being exhausted, or no longer wanted, the horse may be turned loose, and then he may chance to recover it, worn to the bones.

About three o'clock a man was brought to my lodging, severely wounded in the arm by the stab of a dagger. It appeared that he was the owner of a yaboo, which had been seized by a soldier for the purpose of carrying his zumbooruck (a swivel gun, which is generally mounted on the back of a camel): he resisted, and endeavoured to save his beast, upon which the wretch drew out his cummeree, or knife, and gave him a thrust in the arm, which soon made the poor fellow quit the bridle. The wound was in the fleshy or inside part of the fore-arm, below the elbow joint; he had received it three hours before being brought to me, and was in great pain; the arm much swelled, and the flesh having protruded considerably beyond the wound, gave it a very ugly appearance. I made no doubt that some of the ligaments were injured, for he could not use his fingers; and I feared that it might possibly terminate in locked-jaw. I could do little more for the present than remove a tight ligature which had been very injudiciously placed on the arm above the wound, apply a little lint with some balsam, and direct that the whole arm should be kept wet with cold water until the swelling should abate.

I enquired whether any thing would be done for the man by the prince, in case he should lose his arm, or if any punishment would be inflicted on the soldier; they smiled, and shook their head, and

assured me nothing of the kind would ever be thought of. They had already carried the man to the vizier Ahmed Khan, and to the chief priest of the town, neither of whom said more than, "What can I do?" Thus the poor fellow might not only lose his horse, but probably his arm and his life, without the least prospect of compensation, either to himself or family. I could not help adverting to this subject, while sitting with my host, the hadjee, this forenoon, and expressing my wonder that such enormities did not drive the people of Gheelan to despair and rebellion. The hadjee smiled, and replied, that the Gheelanecs had always been a quiet, industrious, and well disposed people, who never thought of any thing but obedience. I could not help hinting to him, that I suspected it was more the want of combination and of a leader, than the want of will, that produced this passive obedience; but he was too grave and cautious a character to commit himself on such a subject; he only smiled again, and the conversation dropt.

The vicinity of Abbas Meerza, and the dread of his regular army, nominal though it chiefly be, has, no doubt, a strongly sedative effect on any spirit of enterprize that may exist in Gheelan. I have heard it even said, that the king would willingly devolve all charge of the province on that prince, if he would pay but one hundred thousand tomauns annually to the treasury; but Abbas Meerza will only receive it on his own terms, that is free of tribute, and to this the king will not give his consent.

I may mention here, that the wounded man attended at my lodgings regularly every second day, to have his arm dressed, and was finally cured, with only the inconvenience of a stiff third finger; the tendon of which had, as I feared from the first, been injured by the dagger. This poor fellow was one of the few, among those who had benefited by my attention, from whom I experienced a grateful return. The moment his arm was so far recovered as to permit him to leave the place without imprudence, he went to his own village, and returned with a fine hen, which he insisted on presenting to me, and which, for the whole time I remained at Resht, furnished me daily with a new-laid egg; he never ceased to visit me, and always

spoke with the greatest thankfulness of what I had done for him. I am happy to add, that by some fortunate chance he recovered the yaboo, which had been the cause of his misfortune.

June 11th. No sooner was the town astir, than reports began to prevail respecting the prince's motions ; some said he was close at hand, others that he would not enter the town for many days : the result of many anxious enquiries was, that a dispatch from the chief minister had reached government here, in which it was stated, that the prince had delayed his departure from Tehran, from various causes, and was not likely to reach Resht before the 27th of the month ; it was even whispered privately, that there was no certainty whatever regarding either the period of his departure or arrival. Here then was an end to any hopes I might have formed from the better dispositions or justice of the elder prince ; and I was thrown back into my former painful state of anxiety and doubt : the reasons which had induced me to abandon all attempts had ceased to exist ; and now every thing again rendered that measure desirable, if practicable ; but the obstacles and difficulties still remained in full force, and I went to consult my friends Meerza Reza, and Hadjee Moolla Baba, on the best means of conquering them.

The meerza had anticipated my ideas on the subject ; he not only saw that the delays were likely to be indefinitely protracted, but thought that the conduct held towards me bore so suspicious and questionable an aspect, that he advised me strongly to fly, if it were possible by any means. He added, that this night would be well suited for the purpose ; because, being of particular sanctity, most people would pass the greater part of it in the mosques at prayer, and would in consequence sleep very late on the ensuing day, to refresh themselves after their pious labours. I felt entirely of his opinion, and went home at once to prepare for taking advantage of all favourable contingencies, determined, if it should by any means be practicable, to leave Resht this night on horseback or on foot.

The prince's jelloodars having accompanied him on his journey, and having in consequence left the horses in charge of the mehters

or grooms, there was, as I understood, no very regular watch kept over them : this circumstance encouraged me once more to think it might be possible to take away two of my own horses ; and I sent my negro servant John, with Seyed Allee, to attempt this service ; they were instructed to go to the grooms, and endeavour to bring me the two horses required, on pretence of showing to me their condition ; and if this should not be permitted, they were to try and take them away by stealth, after the grooms should have gone to rest : in either case they were to wait at a point near the town, where I was to join them in the grey of the morning, and trust to good fortune and great caution for our safe guidance.

The anxiety in which I passed the few succeeding hours till night, may be imagined. John and Seyed Allee did not return till nine o'clock, and then came back unsuccessful. They had tried to get the horses, on pretence of showing them to me ; but the grooms refused to allow of this, saying they had been left too strictly under their charge to admit of their granting such a liberty. They then bade the grooms good night, and affected to leave the field ; but when it became dark, they skulked round to the place where the horses were picketted, and were moving towards them to take them away, when, out of the tents belonging to both princes there issued a crowd of men, as if in alarm, who ran up to the horses, and loosing them, picketted them close to the tents, setting a special watch all around. My servants, observing this manœuvre, squatted among the bushes until the bustle was over, and then, seeing nothing was to be achieved, returned home to me.

This was a severe disappointment ; but though the assistance of horses was not to be had, there still remained the chance of performing the journey on foot, which I resolved on attempting in the morning ; and having made my preparations, I went early to bed, that I might rise betimes, refreshed for my journey. I had not been an hour in bed, when a note in English was brought me from Meerza Reza, telling me that I had been betrayed by one of my servants, and that I must come to him immediately to learn the particulars. I immediately rose and proceeded to the meerza's house, where he related to

me, that one of my servants certainly had given notice to the darogha Cossim Khan of my intention to possess myself of two horses, and to escape this evening: that the darogha had warned the hadjee, my host, to be on his guard; and that the latter had sent to himself (Meerza Reza) to enquire what he might know of the matter, and to express his hope that nothing of the kind would be attempted, as it might seriously affect him, and could do me no good; moreover, to say that all his servants had orders to keep a strict look out, so that there could not be a chance of success for me, if I should make the attempt.

This was a thunderstroke to me: I was perfectly aware of the cowardice of most of my servants; but did not expect, and was not prepared, for their treachery. The meerza joined me in execrating the informer, whom he could not distinctly point out; he believed the name he heard to be *Caussim*, which was that of my cook, and he offered to have him punished if I pleased, but this of course I rejected. He added, that the servants would be too much upon their guard to leave me any chance of eluding their vigilance during the night, but that, wearied with watching, they might slumber towards morning, which might be the best time for my enterprize: I left him, much stunned by this unexpected stroke, but still determined to make the attempt, if possible, in the morning.

My projects were destined to be unsuccessful; after a night restless from anxiety, I rose very early, and being equipped for the journey, looked out to discover whether my guards were on the alert or not; and seeing them all extended before the gate, as I believed fast asleep, I was just going to pass with my shoes in my hand, so as not to disturb them, when John, looking a little further forward, saw one of them wide awake, sitting with his back against the wall; to pass him was impossible; and we examined the walls of the court all around, to see whether a place might not be found low or decayed enough to be scaled; but unfortunately they were too lofty, and, unlike those of most Persian houses, in too good repair to admit of this without assistance; so we waited for a while, ready to seize any chance that might occur in our favour; but it soon became broad

daylight, the inhabitants began to stir, and those who had been praying in the mosques to return to their own homes : escape now was therefore impossible for the time, and I returned once more to my wretched cell, sick with disappointment, and weary with anxiety of mind.

June 12th. As a means of providing for the success of future attempts, it appeared necessary, if possible, to remove from the minds of my keepers all suspicion of my intentions, to persuade them that the information they had received was false, and that it was my wish to await the arrival of the elder prince, at whatever time that should take place. With this view, I sent a message to Hadjee Meer Ismael, requesting to see him. He came accordingly to my apartment about eleven in the forenoon, and I opened the interview by adverting to what I had heard from Meerza Reza, the night before, but treated it as the mistake of a foolish servant. Then, as if it were the chief business on my mind, I began earnestly to enquire about the motions of the prince, adding, that if in truth he were not soon expected, I should be glad to obtain his (the hadjee's) assistance for enabling me to go towards Roodbar, and thus to learn from the prince himself what was to be done with me. The hadjee for a long time evaded my request, but was at last forced to confess that he did not know where the prince really was ; he told me, he had himself sent to Tehran for orders regarding me, and endeavoured to pacify me by general assurances of safety. On the whole I reaped no satisfaction from the conversation, either with regard to my future destiny, or as to the degree of information they had obtained respecting my plans for flight ; but he took care to let me comprehend, that his people were fully upon their guard against any attempt at escape on my part.

The town was in a ferment this whole day with reports concerning both princes. Our stock-exchange was never at a critical period more agitated by contradictory rumours, than the bazar of Resht was at this time. I had recourse to my friend the daee for information in the midst of this bustle ; but he assured me, nothing in the least to be depended on had yet reached government. In

the evening, I went myself to call upon Ahmed Khan the vizier, at the durkhaneh*, both to learn what intelligence might have reached him respecting his master, and to request his permission to set off, under any guard he might choose to appoint, to Roodbar, or wherever he might be, in the hope of earlier procuring my liberty. I might have saved myself the trouble of applying to a man, who had ever shown himself my enemy; and who now only jeered me politely.

Before I could speak, he began the conversation himself, by addressing a profusion of fair speeches to me, observing that I had been a great sufferer, but that all was now over; that the prince, who was certainly to be here in two days, would make up for every thing, by dismissing me loaded with presents, and with all possible honour. I told him this information differed greatly from all I had heard from many other respectable quarters; and that if the prince was so near indeed, all I had to beg of him was to permit me to go forward, and meet him wherever he might be. The vizier assured me, this was out of his power; that his eyes or his tongue, nay his head, might be the forfeit, for such a breach of orders. He hoped I would think no more of it, nor of flight, which he hinted that he knew I had in view; and he broke up the audience with a profession of polite untruths, and Persian compliments, the more provoking as he did not seek to disguise their emptiness. I left him, more harassed with doubt than ever, but also more determined to take the first opportunity of terminating my vexatious captivity.

I now resolved upon a measure which should have been taken earlier, but that the continual hope of escape or dismissal prevented it from occurring to me at all: this was to dispatch, if possible, through the agency of some other person, a message to my friends at Tabreez, to inform them, if still in Persia, of the unpleasant predicament in which I was placed, and to beg them to use their efforts for effecting my release. For this purpose I applied to the only friends

* The door of the palace where the minister usually sits in attendance on the prince, or to transact public business.

I dared to trust in, Meerza Reza and Hadjee Moolla Baba, who not only approved of the measure, but assured me they would procure a messenger to start immediately for Tabreez, with my letters inclosed to a brother of the meerza's there, who should instantly deliver them. I therefore wrote notes to three of the English gentlemen resident in that city, shortly describing my situation, and the events that had led to it, and added on the outside, a request, that in case of their absence, any Englishman there might act for them in my behalf.

I then once more prepared to take advantage of any favourable opportunity that might offer during the night, for commencing my journey, and retired early to rest, if not to sleep. There was a continual bustle all night among the servants, which augured nothing favourable for me; but at length all sounds died away, the hour came. Upon the closest examination that could be made, no watch could be seen at the gate, which was open as usual, and every thing promised success. I dressed myself in silence, and Seyed Allee did the same. I put in my pocket the small packet of necessaries, which I had made up; and after a moment's pause to assure ourselves that all was quiet, we issued from the gate.

We gained the street without interruption; but there was a separate entrance to the hadjee's apartments beyond the gate which opened to the street, and just as we passed this place, we heard a furosh call out, "Who goes there?" and instantly ran down the stairs in pursuit of us. I gave no answer, but moved rapidly on, thinking he might mind us no farther; but he was either aware of what we were about, or his suspicions had been too strongly awakened, for he followed with much clamour, and Seyed Allee, who was behind, was forced to reply. "Where are you going?" demanded the man. "To the hummaum," replied Sey d Allee, with great presence of mind. "To the bath, indeed, at this time of night," rejoined he in a tone of derision: "Come back, come back, madman, this instant," added he, running after me, who taking Seyed Allee's hint, still kept moving on in a direction towards the hummaums. "What!" said I, "am I to be prevented from going to the bath?" "Home, home," cried he, still increasing his uproar. "Get home, madman! You go

“ to the bath indeed !” and he continued his insulting exclamations, until I had nearly reached the house ; boasting now and then of his own cleverness in having thus arrested me, until my patience being fairly worn out, I turned upon him, determined to punish him severely ; he then ran away, and joined his fellows, who were by that time thoroughly alarmed. I lost no time in divesting myself of every thing about me unsuitable to the dress of a person going to the bath, in case of the search which I expected. No one appeared, however, and I once more crept to my couch, when, exhausted and weary with disappointment, I fell into a sounder sleep than I had for some time enjoyed.

CHAP. XV.

NEWS FROM TEHRAN, AND REPORTS OF THE PRINCE'S MOVEMENTS. — ANOTHER SCHEME FOR ESCAPING PROPOSED. — PREPARATIONS. — THE AUTHOR AND HIS SERVANT SUCCEED IN QUITTING RESHT. — THEIR PROGRESS. — REACH A VILLAGE. — ARE ENTERTAINED BY A MOOLLAH FOR THE NIGHT.

JUNE 13th. In order to support my part, I complained the next day to my host of the unnecessary insolence of his servant ; but though the hadjee affected displeasure at the man, it was easy to see that in reality he was not sorry at what had happened, and that I had no reason to look to him for much attention or protection.

A variety of reports were circulated to-day, as usual ; but one piece of intelligence, which was related to me, under an impression that it must give me pleasure, was, on the contrary, the source of much uneasiness, and of an increase of anxiety. The king had been informed of the mistake committed by the young shroff, who brought to Tehran the report of my arrival, as a Russian envoy ; and his majesty, enraged at the trouble he had occasioned, had ordered the young man to be put to death. The prince had interceded for him, and obtained, first a commutation of this sentence, for that of losing both his hands ; and then a pardon of life and limb, on condition of his paying 500 tomauns to the crown. Thus it appeared, that my character and situation were perfectly well known to the king and the prince ; yet no order for my release had been issued : it was therefore to be concluded, that the cause of my detention lay deeper than the shroff's false report, and was probably of a more serious nature.

On the 14th of June ; it was said the harem of the elder prince was ordered out to meet him. This did not augur a speedy return, and

subsequent reports proved the perfect uncertainty existing on this subject. The tents and harem of the younger prince, at all events, were put in motion, and there was another forced loan of cattle and mules for this service. Many poor creatures were again driven to despair; scenes similar to those formerly described were once more acted; — among others, the horses of a native of Khooee, a city of Azerbaijan, who was going to Ardebeel, and was to have carried my letters, was seized, and his journey delayed. Meerza Reza, after I had given him my letters, had spent the night in praying at the mosque, and consequently had slept all the next day; thus my letters had been forgot. So careless and inconsiderate are the best of these people, and so little dependence is to be placed on the exertions of a Persian, however great may be his good will and friendship. Hadjee Moolla Baba had the next day delivered them into the charge of this native of Khooec, who was going to Ardebeel, and from thence to Tabreez, when he was delayed by the above-mentioned misfortune.

Every one was so much on the alert to day, that any attempt at moving was impossible, so I remained quiet at home till evening, when I enjoyed a comfortable dinner with Hadjee Moolla Baba.

June 15th. Reports this day declared, that it was the prince's intention to pass the eede, or feast which follows the termination of the ramazān, at Tehran, with the king; in which case his arrival would be deferred, for at least another month; but there were other speculations, founded on conjectures by no means improbable, by which it was calculated, that he might be detained away from his government for six months to come! Thus was hope every day deferred, and my situation became more distressing and critical. All applications, made either to the hadjee, my keeper, or to the vizier, for messengers to the prince, had been treated with scorn, or answered with falsehoods. Total neglect indeed seemed now my chief danger, and some active measures became absolutely requisite. A new plan of escape was this day suggested by Hadjee Moolla Baba, and I determined to lose no time in proving its efficacy. At this period of the ramazān almost every one goes to the mosque at noon, and continues there for three hours, engaged in prayer, after which they return home and

sleep till evening : they then take the usual meal, but keep very quiet for the remainder of the night, and indeed until the succeeding noon. It was proposed, that on the following day, at noon, I should sally forth, attended as I often was, by the servant who was to accompany me, and proceed, as if merely for a walk, towards a large piece of water called the Einuc, about two miles beyond the town, on the road to Fomen : John was to amuse any person who might ask for me, during the afternoon ; to make the same preparations for dinner, and keep the same lights burning, as usual, which, it was hoped, would prevent all suspicion for the night : I should thus, it was calculated, have twenty-four hours at least in advance of my pursuers, and perhaps much more.

By way of trying how far practicable this scheme might be, I this day walked with Seyed Allec as far as the Einuc, and returned again without being challenged, or, as I believe, suspected ; recollecting, however, how I had before been baffled by the treachery of a servant, I did not mention the place to any one but John, in whose fidelity I could implicitly confide, and who, when I explained my views in thus leaving them behind, agreed with me in their justness, and promised to act his part to the best of his ability.

June 16th. I rose with a confidence of success this morning, which hitherto I had not felt, and lost no time in making all the needful dispositions. I put up a few medicines in case of sickness from over fatigue ; and took besides my journal, a pen and ink, a small sketch-book and pencil, a double-barrelled pistol, with some powder and ball, the dagger I usually wore at my waist, and eight tomauns in gold, with ten reals in silver ; this composed my equipage and resources. I did not take a sword ; that might have excited suspicion ; nor even a cloak, or extra covering of any kind, but dressed in my usual manner, and very lightly, that I might be as little incumbered as possible. Distrusting even Seyed Allee, who was to be my companion, I determined to say nothing to him until the hour of departure should come ; but kept him in my sight, and employed myself in my usual occupations as unconcernedly as possible, in spite of the anxiety I could not but feel.

The time passed very slowly till morn ; and the young people of the house, the hadjee's sons and nephews, were so provokingly officious this morning in sitting with me, and conversing, as they termed it, to cheer my *diltungee*, that I half believed they suspected my intentions. At last, one by one they retired, and the house at length became quite still. The time for noon by my watch was past, but the muezzins from the mosques had not yet called to prayer ; all things seemed to stand still, except the moment for departure, which I thought was eluding my grasp. At last the call to prayers was heard, and the streets were crowded with people flocking to the mosques. I did not wait till these had all passed by, thinking I should be less observed, before the streets were empty. I therefore called Seyed Allee, told him of the reasons I had for suspecting my servants of having before betrayed me, by giving information of my intended departure, and observed, that now was the time to prove *his* innocence, or to admit his guilt, by at once refusing to assist me ; that I had now determined to set out for Tabreez, and was at this moment ready to start, and he must immediately decide whether or not he would stand by me, and accompany me on the journey.

The first part of this address appeared to strike him speechless ; nevertheless he recovered immediately, declared he had never committed such a fault, never had hinted of my intention to any one, — and was now, or at any time, ready to accompany me. He began his reply in so faltering a tone, that my suspicions of him were increased, and though the latter part was more cheerfully spoken, he remained evidently much embarrassed. — “ Are you ready ? ” “ Yes,” replied he. “ Bismillah, then,” said I, “ get your shoes on, and come along ; no other preparation is necessary.” He obeyed slowly, muttering to himself, and giving every now and then a peculiar shake of his head, which I knew not whether to attribute to his distress at the suspicions I had expressed, or to his dislike to the undertaking. At length his countenance cleared up a little, and he announced himself ready. We put into our pockets the bread which remained from breakfast, and out we sallied.

The people were still flocking to the mosques; the shops and bazars were fast shutting up, and every thing seemed to favour us. No one spoke to, or even noticed us, as we moved along rather at a slow pace, as if to enjoy the cool and cloudy weather which prevailed. We went by the palace gates unquestioned, traversed the Subzee Maidan, and passed the custom-house post at the end of the town without suspicion; but a brother of the man whose arm I cured, met and spoke to Seyed Allee. At a police station situated on a bridge near the end of the town, we encountered two or three persons whom I knew to be in the employ of government, and who asked us where we were going. Seyed Allee replied, "Only to take a short walk." They looked hard at us, and I felt a momentary alarm; but nothing further was said, and we passed onward into the open country; and I felt a sensation of security and joy, when a turn in the road shut the town and its inhabitants out from our view.

We now advanced more rapidly along the highway to Fomen, which was excellent, and, though formed in a sandy soil, was bordered with box-wood and other jungle. There were numerous passengers; but though many of them examined us attentively, we met with no interruption, and safely reached the Einuc, a fine piece of water, used for irrigating the rice fields, which was to be our excuse, if questioned by any one, for going so far from town. From thence we came to the banks of a considerable river called the Passwān, not without alarm, for several persons eyed us keenly, and asked where we were going, though none offered to detain us; and we thought fit to get out of the way of several passengers of superior appearance, who might have been more troublesome. Although there were several houses and a custom-house station near the side of the river; we passed them unquestioned, and easily prevailed on the common ferryman, who waited with a boat at the bank, to pass us over; but, unwilling to encounter the examination of a custom-house station which we saw upon the road near the side where we landed, we struck down the river bank among mulberry plantations and rice fields for more than two miles, following narrow and intricate paths,

often through flooded fields and among small villages, till at length we regained the public road beyond the custom-house station. We pursued our course for about three miles further, till we came in sight of a village and small bazar called Nishumbah, where, being alarmed at the appearance of a house like a police station, with a crowd of people about it, some of whom seemed to be soldiers or gholams, we struck into the jungle on the road side to consult together.

I have already remarked that neither of us had any thing beyond a very general idea of our way, and that it was impossible for us to obtain information without incurring suspicion. Indeed, the extreme intricacy of the country made it impossible to comprehend any directions that should apply to a great length of way. Thus we only knew, that if we could at any point ascend the hills on our left, we should get clear of Ghicelān, and into an open practicable country. Seyed Allee had already suggested that we should try to get among the villages on our left, towards the foot of the hills, where a guide might possibly be procured. We also knew that the road commonly followed towards Ardebeel lay on the sea-side to our right; and we believed, that if we should be able once to get to the neighbourhood of Enzellee, we might not only pursue our track in safety, but obtain guides and mules as we went along. Either course was better than to run the gauntlet, as we now were doing, of all the rahdar stations and passengers on the high road.

Having duly considered the matter, we determined on attempting to make for the sea-side, and then to pursue the Ardebeel road, as the forest on our left appeared too thick and too much covered with water to be penetrated. The decision was probably wrong, for it lost us much precious time; but we did for the best, and accordingly struck into a thicket of box, alder, and other woods on our right, in a direction nearly at right angles to the high road.

I had no pocket compass, and the sun did not shine, so that we had many difficulties besides natural obstacles to contend with. One of these was, to decide on what characters we were to assume, and what to answer when questioned. A consistent story was indispens-

able ; so we at last resolved to pass for two topechees or artillerymen, in the service of the prince, going from Casveen to Ardebeel by Enzellee ; and if it should be objected that the way to Enzellee from Resht was by Peerce Bazar, we were to say we had at first intended to go by Fomen ; but, understanding that the more direct way was by Enzellee, had endeavoured to reach that place. This story, we hoped, would do for the villagers, whom alone we trusted to meet, though it could not impose on persons in authority, whom we fervently wished to avoid.

We soon got entangled among flooded rice fields, and were hailed by two men who were cutting mulberry branches ; but alarmed, and desirous to avoid being questioned, we took no notice of them. At last one of them said, “ If you are going to Enzellee, “ you have mistaken the way ; this is it.” Happy at the chance which had thus directed us, we answered with civility, gave them thanks for their guidance, and pursued the track they had indicated. It soon failed us, and landed us in a thick forest deep in water. Here we wandered for a considerable time, but at length stumbled upon a sort of winding alley of felled trees, among the trunks of which we picked our way, stepping from one to another, though hardly hoping it could lead to any habitation. To our great joy, however, we at last emerged upon a small mulberry garden by the side of a deep creek, where a man was cutting the branches to feed his silk-worms. He told us that he was a stranger himself, and could not direct us, but he pointed to some houses, where, he said, we might possibly find a guide. This forced us to retrace our way for a considerable distance to a wooden bridge over the creek. We crossed it, and found ourselves close to some habitations, in front of which there was an old man occupied in repairing some articles of husbandry.

He gazed upon us with astonishment when we spoke to him, and protested, that, though bred and born in the place, he had never been at Enzellee, nor knew his way in these deep jungles further than to the different divisions of his own and a few neighbouring villages. He had heard, however, of a road to Enzellee, which was

said to lie across some rice grounds which he showed us, and pointed out a house beyond them where we might, he believed, obtain further information. Thither we went, and, after much delay and demur, procured a little girl about six years old to show us the way across the fields. This led us to another village, whence we took a fresh departure, and proceeded along a road very tolerable at first, but which, like most others, after a mile or so, plunged into a thick forest, split into two, and both gradually disappeared. One of these branches had the appearance of an abandoned road; the other, though exceedingly bad, and leading principally over felled trees to enable the traveller to pass the water which covered the soil below, appeared to be most frequented. We therefore followed it, till, after many turnings and windings, we lost it in the mud, and agreed in the necessity of returning. The former was then tried, but it led us by a great circuit nearly to the point from whence it started, and disappeared in an impenetrable thicket of brambles and box-wood.

We now held another council of war on what was next to be done, and decided upon retracing our steps to the last village, and there endeavouring to obtain a guide. This we accordingly did, and, after great difficulty, induced two children to show us the Enzellee road. We discovered that we had been nearly right at first, but that the true path struck off through a forest of alder trees, with underwood of brambles and thorns, so close, and in so deep a morass, that no one could have suspected it to be practicable for human foot. It was causewayed with fallen trunks and branches of trees, and often covered with water; so that, though a man might scramble on, no four-legged animal could possibly have advanced a step. This path carried us back to the side of the creek we had passed, and a little further on we found a considerable village. Here our inquiries were for a long time most unsuccessful; some people only stared at us; others had heard of Ardebeel, but had not the smallest conception of where it lay; to Enzellee there was indeed a road, and we might find it out by inquiring at the clusters of houses further on.

Thither we went, and at last met with a decent-looking person, who enquired who we were, and where we were going : on hearing our tale, he shook his head, and said we had been imposed upon ; that our direct way to Ardebeel was through Fomen, and that by going to Enzellee we were just losing so much ground. After hearing this piece of unnecessary information, we enquired no further, glad that he did not ask us for our credentials, which might have embarrassed us sorely. As the sun was now fast setting, and we hoped we had gone far, and irregularly enough, to elude pursuit, we began to think of getting under cover for the night ; and asked the man if he could any where show us a corner to lie down in, and procure a morsel for us to eat ; he told us if we would go but a few yards further to a shed that served as a mosque, we should there find a moollah, who would accommodate us. We soon found the place, a miserable mud-built hovel, with only one side inclosed from the wind. The moollah was deeply engaged reading the korān, seated upon an old mat, of which there were one or two more for occasional use, rolled up against the wall. On our giving him the usual salutation, he received us civilly, and pointing to one of the spare mats, desired us to spread it and sit down. He then enquired who we were, and where we came from. Upon hearing our story, he asked if I was a mussulman ? “ Yes,” said Seyed Allce, “ we are so.” He made but few other enquiries, and after asking who had sent us to him, he told us to take up our lodgings there, and that we should be provided with food.

The hour of prayer being arrived, Seyed Allce went through the various ceremonies and positions, which I repeated after him, in a manner quite satisfactory, as it appeared, to the good moollah, who soon after left us to ourselves, and sent us a plentiful and savory meal of chillaw, or plain boiled rice, with a stew formed both of flesh and fish. We could not help congratulating ourselves on such good fortune ; we lighted a fire, for the exhalations from the flooded rice-fields around made the air very cold, and then betook ourselves to rest.

Sleep, however, was not easily procured in spite of our fatiguing day ; for, being utterly destitute of any warm covering, the cold was sufficient to keep us awake, independent of multitudes of hungry and active fleas, and clouds of musketoës, generated in the swamps around, which filled the air so thickly, that we inhaled them at every breath. After several hours of torment, I contrived to envelope my head in the cloth which formed the girdle of my dress, and having pulled one of the old mats over us both, at length succeeded in obtaining a few hours troubled repose.

CHAP. XVI.

THE JOURNEY RESUMED. — REACH TOOLOO BAZAR. — PROGRESS TO KISHMAH. — ESCAPES AND ADVENTURES. — TEREGORAM BAZAR. — PEER-E-JALLEE IMAUMZADEH. — REACH A VILLAGE. — ENTERTAINMENT THERE. — RESUME THE ROAD TOWARDS AZERBIJAN. — ASCEND THE MOUNTAINS BY A DIFFICULT PASS. — CROSS THEM AND ENTER AZERBIJAN. — REACH THE VILLAGE OF DEES.

JUNE 17th. We had walked so rapidly for seven hours the preceding day, that I calculated, in spite of our irregular and often interrupted course, we could not be less than twenty miles distant from Resht ; yet such had been our loss of time and space from the intricacies of the road and frequent delays, that we found the village where we spent the night was not reckoned more than twelve miles from that city. Indeed the sound of the evening gun announcing sun-set, proved too painfully the accuracy of this account. There was, therefore, no time to be lost in prosecuting our journey, and as soon as the twilight was strong enough to direct us, we left our uneasy beds, and moved onwards.

We had gained some information from our host the moollah respecting our road : he confirmed the inutility of going by Enzellec, and told us that though one road did indeed pass through Fomen, there was another which went by a village called Kishmah, and thence to Kiskār or Gaskār, where it joins the direct road to Ardebeel, in the district of Khal-Khal. We further learned that the road to Kishmah was to be taken up at a place called Tooloo Bazar, not more than four miles from where we slept ; and as it was said to be very good all the way from thence, we thought if we could, for any consideration, but get a guide so far, our safety would be certain.

We started about half-past four in the morning, and passing through the village, still perfectly quiet, crossed a succession of rice-swamps in the direction that had been indicated ; but we soon went astray, and it was not without the greatest difficulty, and considerable delay, that we prevailed upon a man who had just risen to put us in the right road. This proved to be a path which, for badness and intricacy, surpassed all we had yet seen, even in this land of villainous roads. It wound among the branches of a large stream, flowing in deep and muddy currents among the most tangled jungle : for hundreds of yards we had to scramble over the roots and branches of trees, to pass the deep pools on single stems thrown across, and often to wade thigh-deep in mud and water, overgrown with thorns and rank weeds. It would be a tedious repetition to relate all the mistakes we made, and the toil we endured, until we emerged close to a few houses on the banks of a clear stream, where we saw two lads, one feeding his silk-worms with branches, which the other was gathering from a mulberry garden.

We asked their assistance to guide us to Tooloo Bazar, which, after some hesitation, one of them offered to do for a real, but as it was not our business to appear too rich, we offered him only half ; he then called out to his companion " Holla, Caussim, here are two mussulmans who want to find the way to Tooloo Bazar, and offer me half a real as a guide, what say you ?" " Take care, take care," replied Caussim, " you may be sure they want to do you some mischief ; don't go by any means." " What ill can we mean ?" said Seyed Allee ; " Here are two slaves of God who want guidance from two mussulmans, and they offer you money (showing him a real) ; what harm can there be in that ?" The two lads laughed foolishly, but hung their heads, and continued silent. " See," pursued Seyed Allee, " look at this money, you shall have it in your hands, my fine fellows, till you reach the Tooloo Bazar, when half of it becomes your own." Still they hung back ; they were sure, they said, that we meant them some evil ; and after a time we found that they took us for servants of the prince, who were making our escape, and to assist whom would subject them to the prince's indignation. The

ill usage which villagers are too often subjected to in Persia from the servants of the great, makes them fear their very looks; and if a poor fellow be discovered, even ignorantly, to have guided or assisted a runaway, he is punished without mercy, as if he had been guilty of a voluntary and heinous crime. On the other hand, the minions of government so often lay hold of these poor people, seizing the first they meet, and pressing him to be their guide, that they fly in terror and disgust at the appearance of any one connected with the court. Nevertheless, by dint of kind words we prevailed on these lads to guide us to the bazar, provided we would wait until they had fed their silk-worms.

This operation proved so tedious, that after frequently beseeching the two young men to proceed, we lost patience, and took the direction they had before indicated, intending to grope out the way as we best could. But the sight of the money had produced its effect; and before we had gone far, we were overtaken by one of our friends, now willing enough to show the way; it was fortunate that he came, for the path proved to be so intricate we should never have found it without guidance; but with this help, we reached Tooloo Bazar about seven o'clock in the morning.

Tooloo Bazar, as its name implies, is one of those places frequently to be met with in Gheelān, which are appointed as stations for markets upon certain days in the week, and to which the inhabitants of all the neighbouring villages resort for the purpose of buying and selling, and interchanging their wares. On other days, as at this time, it is empty of inhabitants, and only displays certain rows of bare sheds, which, during the market, are occupied by the different merchants, and their goods. We entertained hopes of procuring ponies or mules to hire at this place; but nothing of the kind was to be had, so dismissing our guide, we pushed rapidly forward on the road to Kishmah.

This now lay in the line of Shah Abbas's causeway, of which traces were still visible, and which goes all the way to Kiskar. There were also remains of brick bridges over the watercourses, and large stones here and there, with plenty of gravel and sand,

forming a fine bottom, and rendering the deepest mud that lies above it passable for cattle. In some places the path, which was broad and in excellent order, lay through a box-wood jungle; and in others, wound along the ridges dividing the rice-fields; but it was no where so intricate as that we had already passed. We met many people going towards the bazar, who informed us from time to time of the road, and asked no questions; so that we reached Kishmah, twelve miles from Tooloo Bazar, between ten and eleven in the forenoon.

Kishmah, like Tooloo, is a mere collection of empty sheds, where a market is periodically held; but there are also a few permanent inhabitants, and the khetkodah or magistrate of the village to which it is annexed, comes down during the day-time, and takes up his station in a shed that serves as a mosque. We were not at this time aware of that circumstance, but on crossing a clear stream of water that runs by it, and approaching the bazar, we got alarmed at the appearance of some suspicious-looking persons there, and turned off to the right without entering. We soon lost our way, but meeting with a dervish, who seemed to guess that we wished for concealment, he not only put us on our road again, but showed us a more private way, which, though difficult, we preferred, as being less dangerous to us than the high road.

It proved, indeed, extremely intricate, winding through a maze of villages and rice-fields, among which we not only often lost our way, but ran many narrow risks of detection; on one occasion we came plump upon a cluster of houses, where, under the shade of a tree, we saw one of the prince's gholams sitting and refreshing himself. Had he once seen us, he would certainly have stopped and detained us; on another, upon turning the corner of a lane, we found ourselves directly in front of some great man's house crowded with servants, by some of whom it is wonderful that we were not perceived. Fortune, however, favoured us, and about two o'clock we reached the village and bazar of Teregoram, said to be two fursungs, but in reality at least three from Kishmah.

As we were going to enter this place we met a villager, from whom we made some enquiries respecting the road to Khal-Khal and Ardebeel. The man, after looking earnestly at us for some time, asked whether we had any business at the bazar ; " because," added he, " if not, you had better not go near it ; *you*," observed he to Seyed Allee, " may pass unnoticed, but *he*," nodding to me, " will " certainly be recognized." The man said this with perfect benevolence and sincerity, believing us to be both runaways, and that I was a Russian prisoner attempting to make my escape. Seyed Allee took the hint, and asked him what route he would recommend us to take for Khal-Khal, observing that we intended to go three fursungs further on to Kiskar, and thence to ascend the passes. " No," said the man, " you have no business with Kiskar, which you could " never pass undiscovered ; you have only to turn to the left, without entering this village, and crossing the river you see there, " by the bridge, go along the road which is good and plain, and ask " for *Peer-e-jallee Imaumzadeh*, which is not far off ; from thence " you can easily learn the way to Khal-Khal or Ardebeel ; if I could " I would go and guide you on the way ; but that is not in my " power. May God protect you !"

We followed this good man's advice, and found ourselves in a large, well made, and much travelled road ; which we kept, until the direction it took alarmed us, for it appeared to be carrying us back to Resht. We had now a few minutes of extreme anxiety ; we could not venture to proceed, for the passengers we should most likely meet on such a road, would, no doubt, be dangerous ; to go back was fully as much so, and what to do we could not tell. Fortunately this uncertainty was terminated by the appearance of three men, who showed us the point at which the Peer-e-jallee road struck off from that on which we were ; and which we now found to be the great high road between Resht and Kiskar.

One of these men was himself going to Peer-e-jallee ; we accompanied him along an excellent and spacious road, winding through a wooded valley, along the banks of a broad but shallow stream. On the way we discovered that our guide was an inhabitant

of Khal-Khal ; and we obtained from him some useful information regarding the road ; he advised us to stop at the village of Shalimah, if we should not be able to reach an imaunzadeh, a few miles further on, which was at the foot of the pass. He left us at Peer-e-jallee, which was a little mosque and place of pilgrimage on the road side, and, encouraged by what we had learnt, we pushed on at a brisk rate, happy to observe that we were rapidly closing with the mountains ; and at length, entered one of their lower glens. After walking very fast for full three hours, or till near dusk, we turned towards some houses on the left hand, which we supposed to belong to Shalima, but an old man whom we found at his prayers, informed us that we were still some way from thence ; and he advised us to take up our quarters for the night at Mcer-e-Muhuleh, a village close by, where he himself lived, and where there was, he assured us, a very hospitable seyed, who would delight in receiving us. The former part of his advice we resolved on adopting, but as to the seyed, we determined to have nothing to say to him, unless we could manage to procure from him, as charity, some victuals, of which we stood in great need. The bread which we had taken with us from Resht, had indeed done us worthy service, for we had not been able to procure any thing during the whole of this day, and had lived on that alone ; it was now finished, and as we had a very fatiguing journey before us next day, it would not have been comfortable or expedient to commence it after a supperless night.

We had to cross and recross the river once or twice on our way to the village, which, like all others in these parts, was composed of groups of houses scattered amongst large trees. Our first care was to secure a place in which we might pass the night, and this we soon found in a ruined hut which had been a tomb or mosque, but which would not have served to exclude the effects of bad weather, had it come on. There were no mats, the roof had fallen in, and the inside was full of dirt and ruins. It was a wretched place, but better than risk of discovery. I sent Seyed Allee to the seyed's house, to see if he could procure some eatables ; while I in the mean time, remembering our suffering from cold the night before, cut a large

quantity of fern which grew luxuriantly about, to serve as a bed and covering for us both. I also collected dry sticks for fuel, and prepared a fire-place for warming any food that we might be fortunate enough to procure.

Seyed Allee returned unsuccessful; he had seen the seyed's house; it had a mehman-khaneh, or place for entertaining guests, with fine carpets and all sorts of comforts for guests, but was not the place for persons like us. He then tried in several houses to procure a few eggs, some cheese, or a little milk, and begged them to dress some rice for us; but no one would either sell or give him any thing, and he returned in a very comfortless condition to our den; where, having made a fire, we dried our wet clothes, and gave up the hope of food or assistance for the night. At this time a poor seyed came by, who, attracted by our forlorn condition, enquired who we were, and where we had come from. We related to him our story, described our wants, and begged him for God's sake at least to get us a vessel of water. This he complied with, and brought us likewise a mat to lie on: we complained to him then of the churlish conduct of the villagers, observing that this could not surely be a village inhabited by Mussulmans, as no true believer would act in the way they had done; we therefore besought him, if possible, to procure us a mouthful of food. He then left us execrating his fellow villagers for the inhospitality which had subjected them to such reproaches from strangers, and promised his best endeavours to assist us.

Accordingly we had hardly composed ourselves to sleep, which, distrusting his success, we very soon attempted to do, when we were visited by a son of the seyed, the master of the village, to whom we had at first been recommended to apply, with a train of servants bearing a large tray of provisions for us. The young man made an apology for having suffered us to remain so long unfurnished with food, and asked us to remove to the house. This of course we declined, but thankfully accepted of the good cheer, and dined most comfortably on capital pillaw, and a rich meat stew, with sherbet to drink. The young man remained by us, while we eat by the light of a torch, and then left us, wishing us a good night, and a happy

journey. The seyed, I afterwards learned, was a truly hospitable man, and had we not feared to apply to him at first, would no doubt have received us with all possible kindness: it was otherwise with his servants and the villagers, who would have permitted us to starve at leisure. There was something particularly considerate in the old man sending his son to attend on two poor strangers, particularly after their refusing to receive his hospitality in his own house.

We had been on our feet, and incessantly in motion this day, from a little past four in the morning, till near seven at night; and for great part of the time had walked very fast; so that we could not have travelled less than forty miles: this, added to the journey of the former day, and a sleepless night, had pretty well fatigued us both; nevertheless we did not enjoy one whit more rest. The fern made a good bed, but a very indifferent covering; and we suffered, as before, from severe cold and clouds of musquitoes, so that we rose stiff and unrefreshed.

June 18th. We took the road as soon as we could see, holding upwards along the bank of the river for about a mile, till, crossing it on a wooden bridge, we rejoined the main road to Khal-Khal. A forest of alders, vying in size with the largest oaks, fringed the river side, and shaded us as we walked rapidly along. The spurs of the loftier mountains covered with oak, ash, beech, sycamore, and the various forest-trees of Gheelān, rose on every side, and gradually closed up our view of the plains. Beyond these we could see at times the remote ridges, bare of trees, and spotted with snow, rising to a height that gave us serious earnest of the ascent we were about to encounter.

This pass, properly speaking, begins at the village of Shalimah, three miles from our night's quarters, from whence the road, now rendered difficult and bad by deep miry clay and stones, winds for a few miles further, ascending and descending irregularly along the banks of the stream. We then commenced an ascent or succession of passes, which, for length and steepness, I have never seen equalled. The height of the mountains at this place cannot be short of seven thousand feet, and as the whole length of the ascent is comprized in

about twelve miles of distance, some idea may be formed of its steepness. The road, for the most part, went right up the face of a projection from the great range above, seldom slanting along the side ; so that there was no relaxation of toil, nor any level space, and no descents whatever ; all was fair continued breasting. The path, if such it might be called, was of a nature to aggravate this labour exceedingly ; the northern face of the hills consisting far more of earth than of rock, was so spongy and wet, owing to continual rain, that the feet sunk deep in the soil wherever it was not covered with grass. This had occasioned the parts most trodden on to become almost impassable from mud, and the evil was increased by the stones scattered through it, which not being sufficient in quantity to form a hard bottom, served only to render it uneven, and to wound the feet. It was seldom we enjoyed the comfort of firm footing, and never but when the path ran in the bed of a torrent, where we had to leap from stone to stone, and rock to rock continually.

Inspired by hope and a strong desire for freedom, we at first ascended rapidly ; but the steepness and badness of the road combined, in time subdued us, and forced us first to slacken our pace, and then to make frequent halts to recover breath. As we mounted still further, our fatigue increased, and we could not make above fifty paces without pausing to rest. We were both distressed, but I was the most so ; my knees trembled, and my head swam round every now and then so as to force me to sit down and recover ; nor could I account entirely for sensations which appeared to exceed what could be occasioned by the toil we were undergoing, and far beyond what I had before experienced in similar situations. Seyed Allee had eaten some bread in the morning, a precaution which I had not taken ; and thinking that my uneasiness might be occasioned by inanition, we halted at a small brook and refreshed ourselves with a drink of water and a mouthful of the bread we had remaining. I would not stop more than twenty minutes, both because I was unwilling to lose more time, and because, when fatigued, the limbs are apt, after sitting for a long time, to get chilled, stiff, and painful.

We now pursued our way, and I felt wonderfully invigorated; the more painful symptoms vanished, and we got on apace. Many travellers from Khal-Khal passed us; some eyed us suspiciously, but no one made any particular remark in our hearing. We were guided part of the way by a villager, who was going to his summer habitation in the mountains; and we saw several families moving from below to the more elevated regions. Here and there, at an opening of the forest, we saw houses formed of logs, thatched with boughs of trees, or covered with thick felt, the temporary habitations of these emigrants. We had now entered into that district of the mountains called Tālīsh, only part of which yields a limited obedience to the prince of Gheelān; while the rest acknowledge the same imperfect subjection to the Russian authorities at Lankeroon. Had we been better informed respecting our position, a very short course would have carried us across the frontier into the Russian territories, out of all risk of pursuit; but this at the time we were ignorant of, and held our way right on to the mountain top, upon crossing which we knew that we should enter Azerbaijan.

After long-continued toil, we surmounted all the subordinate hills, which were covered with the trees common to the country, and found ourselves high upon the chief range, where the wood at first became more scattered, and at length ceased entirely, leaving much of the upper parts clothed only with rich pasture. From this point we enjoyed a most magnificent view; the whole country of Gheelān, from Sucht-Sir point, near Tunnacaboon, to Kiskar, and as far as Lankeroon, lay like a map at our feet; Enzellee and its large inland sea seemed no bigger than a pond; while the great Caspian bounded the horizon on the north-east, and, mingling with the hazy sky in a line hardly to be distinguished, formed a scene of singular interest and grandeur.

The first pull up the face of the main hill nearly exhausted us; the path lay upon a moist earthy steep, in which our feet either slipped, or we sunk up to the knee continually; but when we had mounted it, we found ourselves in a cooler climate, upon a shoulder

of the great range, covered with the greenest and most luxuriant grass, and within one more effort of what appeared to be the top of the pass.

The patches of snow which we had seen from below, and the highest peaks of bare stone, were now at no great distance. At this place we found several muleteers, who had left Shalimah in the morning, resting and feeding their cattle after the fatigue of their ascent. We had thus overtaken them, though having so far the start of us. They were going the same way as ourselves; and as we now felt secure of having escaped pursuit, we had no hesitation in joining their company. Whether the mountain air gave us more vigour, or the presence of companions lightened the way, or, what is as likely, the confirmation of hope and closer approach of liberty, had raised our spirits, and reanimated our strength, I know not; but certainly this last ascent though abundantly severe, distressed us much less than any of the rest; and we reached the top, fresher by far than when we had completed but one third of the way.

From hence we wound along the ridge of the hills, and approached the main peak, of which this was but a principal branch; the ascent now diminished to a gradual rise, and the road, which was excellent, soon brought us to the yeilak, or station where the people from the plains below lived in tents or small wooden huts, surrounded by their flocks and herds. Here the muleteers halted again, and, unloading their beasts, permitted them to graze, while they themselves prepared their own repast. I regretted the delay, but, being satisfied that we were now beyond all danger from pursuit, and being also desirous to secure the guidance of these people, one of whom had promised to supply us with mules next day, I thought it better to remain with them. Accordingly, after taking a copious and most refreshing draught of butter-milk and water, procured from one of the huts near us, I lay down among the soft grass, and slept soundly for near an hour.

We reached the foot of the pass a little after six in the morning, and completed the ascent to this place by about one o'clock in the day. For the first part of the way we might have walked about two

miles an hour ; but subsequently, including halts, I do not think we exceeded one. Perhaps the whole ascent thus far may be estimated at between eight and nine miles.

The view from this height was far more extensive than from below, but from extreme elevation and distance, it was less distinct, and less beautiful : the distant Caspian, the inland sea of Enzellee, with the swamps, forests, and rice-fields of Gheelān, dim with intervening vapour, bore a greater resemblance to the obscure and uncertain shadows that appear upon the surface of the moon, when viewed through a powerful telescope, than to any terrestrial landscape : the lower hills we had left had diminished, in appearance, to mere knolls, and were almost lost sight of in viewing the wilder ridges amongst which we were now placed. The highest mountains, though generally steep, were broken into masses with hollows between them, affording a certain degree of level ground, covered with pasture, on which the Yeilakees encamp. The summits are rocky, and the stones being white or grey, appear like spots of snow. Further down the mountains soon sink into numerous ravines, leading into one another, and each becomes the channel of a torrent, formed by a large patch of snow, occupying its upper extremity. Wood rose in these ravines to various heights, and partially concealed deep chasms, where the principal streams uniting, form the numerous rivers which irrigate the province of Gheelān.

After a halt of an hour and a half, we resumed our march, but found, when we reached the point we believed to be the summit, the road still wound higher over a huge mass beyond it ; but it was good and hard, the air was fresh and clear, the scene lively, and pastoral ; settlements of Yeilakees with their flocks appeared on every side, so that we proceeded merrily. At last, after another steep pull, we gained the true summit, full five miles from our halting place ; from whence we looked down on the one hand into Gheelān, and on the other over the bare hilly district of Khal-Khal in Azerbaijan. I did not think that a return to the brown plains and barren hills of Upper Persia could ever have given me the pleasure which, circumstanced as I was, their sight now afforded.

After a short breathing space we descended rapidly, and lost sight of Gheelān, as I hoped, for ever. The road here was fine; being without clay or mud to embarrass us, but covered with short green turf, and affording us a pleasant footing, while fountains here and there served to allay our thirst. As we got lower, however, the soil became rocky, and the path, stony and rough, wound precipitously along the rapid descent of the bed of a torrent, to the village of Gheeleewan, the first we came to belonging to Azerbaijan. It is large and neat, but we had returned to the land of mud-houses, flat roofs and ruins. The only wood near it consisted of fruit trees, poplars, and a kind of willow called sinjid, by the natives, the flower of which possesses a delicious odour. It may be mentioned as a proof of the difference which exists between the climates of Gheelān and Azerbaijan, that we found the fruits, as apricots, plums, and cherries, which were perfectly ripe in the former province, little more than set here, and were informed they would not be ripe for nearly two months.

We passed through Gheeleewan about an hour before sunset, unquestioned, and, as we hoped, unobserved; after which, we continued our descent along the stream, in a westerly direction, for more than two miles; and then, leaving it on our left, entered the dry bed of a torrent, and followed it a long way among low and bare sandy hillocks. It was now so dark that we could not see; and being parched with thirst, and weary with constant exertion, could scarcely follow the rapid pace of the muleteers, till near nine o'clock, when our eyes were gladdened by the lights of the village Dees, which was to be our resting-place for the night. A rapid torrent still separated us from it, which we were forced to wade through thigh-deep; and beyond this there was a long space of rough rocky ground, which proved a severe additional penance to our blistered feet. At length we reached the village—but alas, there was no welcome for us; we did not yet chuse to discover ourselves, and therefore could not apply to any strangers for assistance; we had learned that there was a ruined caravansery, and a mosque in the same situation, in the place, to one of which we proposed to retreat; but without any hope of food

or refreshment. At last one of the muleteers offered to let us sleep on the top of his house, and promised to get us something to eat. We gladly accepted his offer, and took up our quarters in the open air, though it was piercing cold, in hopes of procuring from him beasts to forward us in the morning. After a time he brought us some bread and sour milk, both cold ; and feeling a little compassion for our sufferings, gave us an old mule-cloth to throw over us : my clothes being wet, chilled me so much, that I was forced to put off a part of them, and even then could get no sleep for the cold : it was past eleven before we went to rest, both covered with the same mule-cloth, and creeping close together to keep ourselves warm ; but it was near one in the morning before I fell asleep.

CHAP. XVII.

THE AUTHOR AND HIS SERVANT DISAGREEABLY WAKENED. — ARRESTED AS A RUSSIAN SPY. — HIS TREATMENT. — HURRIED BACK TO GHEELEEWAN — AND TO THE YEILAK OF MAHOMED KHAN MASSAUL. — TREATMENT THERE. — FORCED TO DESCEND THE MOUNTAIN. — CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE AUTHOR'S RECAPTURE. — REACH A VILLAGE AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN. — GHOLAUMS DESCRIBED. — CONDUCTED BACK TO RESHT. — JOURNEY DESCRIBED. — INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER AT RESHT. — REACH ONCE MORE THE HOUSE OF HADJEE MEER ISMAEL.

I HAD not been an hour asleep when a loud noise awakened me with a start, and I heard the feet of many people climbing to the roof of the house where we were, and calling out, "Where are they? where are they? let us see them immediately." Before we had well opened our eyes, our miserable bed was surrounded by a number of armed men, who began to rouse us very roughly: Seyed Allee was the first to sit up, and ask, "What is the matter?" "Nothing with you," replied a rough voice; "but let us see this one." I rose then, and he instantly exclaimed, "Yes, yes, this is the man; this is the Russian prisoner who has escaped." It was no longer difficult to perceive that we were pursued and overtaken; and all that could now be done was to try, if possible, to interest the chief of the village in our cause, and endeavour to gain his protection. There was great confusion, and much interrogation and reply passed to no purpose; but the chief of the party, a stout gruff-looking man, armed to the teeth, declared that I must instantly go with him: — "Whither?" demanded I. "To Mahomed Khan Talish," said he; "who has sent to seize you on the part of Mahomed Reza Meerza, governor of Resht." I immediately requested to know which was the ketkhodah of the village, and an old man coming forward to claim the title, I addressed him as follows; — "I am no Russian, nor subject of Mahomed Reza

“ Meerza, but an Englishman, protected by your king, as well as by
“ my own government, as I can prove by papers now in my posses-
“ sion, which, if you please, you may read ; and I demand of you
“ to lead me before Mahomed Koolee Khan, your master, governor
“ of this district ; and that you, by no means, give me up to these
“ people ; if you do, it will be at your peril, for be assured you will
“ not escape punishment.”

The ketkhodah replied, that he could not help it, that these were the people of Mahomed Khan Tālish, who had their prince's order to arrest me ; and that he could not detain me in defiance of these. He however demanded to see the papers, which I accordingly handed to him, and which one of the people near him endeavoured to spell the meaning of: “ Well,” said he, “ bring these papers along with
“ you to the chamber where we are going, and we shall see what is to
“ be done.” At the time the chief of the Talish band first awakened me, he took care to secure both my dagger, and the double-barrelled pistol, which I had laid ready as usual under my head ; I was thus without the means of resistance, which would, at best, have been useless, and most probably, if attempted, would have ended fatally ; so I told the ketkhodah in reply, that I had no intention to oppose the force around me ; but again reminded him of my appeal to his superior, and warned him that he could have no right to detain me, nor could be compelled to deliver me up to the order of any other person whatever.

The moment I went down, several toffunchees, with their drawn Gheelanee daggers, rushed upon me, and seized me very roughly, but I shook them off, and calling to their chief, warned him to be on his guard ; that I had no intention to run away, and would submit to the decision of the ketkhodah and his chief ; so that there could be no reason for binding me, and that he had best beware of insulting me, as very surely such an act would be productive of most serious consequences to himself. Seyed Allee, also, who had recovered himself a little, took occasion to say, that he could vouch for my being connected with the English elchee at Tehran, and that their heads would answer any injury offered to me. Upon these remonstrances, I was

permitted to walk unbound, and the chief assured me that I should be treated respectfully and well.

On my reaching the ketkhodah's chamber, where I found a still larger armed party, I was again requested to produce my papers, which were now read, and accurately examined; the ketkhodah fully and clearly understood that there was among them a safe-conduct from Prince Mahomed Koollee Meerza, and another from Allee Reza Meerza, besides a letter from the English ambassador; and I again demanded of him to be sent to his chief Mahomed Koollee Khan, and protested against being delivered over to the wild Talish clans, with whom my life could not be deemed safe. The chief of the Talish party now loudly insisted, that the ruckum* from Allee Reza Meerza, could never supersede, or cancel the order he brought on that prince's part to seize me; asserting also that I was a Russian prisoner, and defying me to deny it. As soon as I could obtain a hearing, I told the ketkhodah the whole of my story; repeated that I was not a Russian, but an English subject, proceeding to Tabreez on business with the English ambassador there; that it was true, I had been detained on a pretence of that sort by Allee Reza Meerza for some time at Resht, and had now left it to follow my own concerns, from which no one had a right to detain me. I repeatedly warned him, that any violence to my person would be severely visited on all concerned in such acts. I requested him to consider well the consequences, before he resolved to give me up, and finally demanded, in the name of his prince and governor, Abbas Meerza, that he should forward me, without delay, either to his own chief, Mahomed Koollee Khan, at Hero, or, if he preferred it, at once to Tabreez.

This speech, seconded by a similar harangue, but more in their own style, and perhaps more intelligible, from Seyed Allee, produced some effect; and a great deal of earnest discourse passed between the ketkhodah, the Talish officer, and one or two other persons in company, who I suspected to have some official connection with the government of Tabreez; one of these personages in particular ap-

* Order or declaration.

pearing unwilling to give way to the Talish chief, I availed myself of this opening, and addressed myself particularly to him, but it was all in vain ; the ketkhodah having made up his mind, lent a deaf ear to all that could be said. He told me the Talish chief was his own brother, and a servant of his master's, Mahomed Koolee Khan, the chief of Khal-Khal, who was now at Gheeleeewan ; that to him I should be taken, and he should judge himself, whether it were expedient to deliver me to Mahomed Khan or not : that in the mean time, I should not only be safe, but respectfully treated, and provided with a horse to carry me. He then, calling out to his brother, formally delivered me over to him ; saying, " Take care of this person as of " your own life, or your head shall answer it."

Thus, after all my exertions and fatigues, after all my high-raised hopes, and the joy of my promised escape, I saw myself, in the very moment of fancied security, torn from the asylum I had chosen, and delivered into the hands of robbers and plunderers, daring villains who set human life at nought, by those who certainly ought to have protected me. I knew but too well the character of these Talish highlanders, who live by blood and plunder, and had often heard Mahomed Khan, into whose power I had now unhappily fallen, spoken of as the most cruel and treacherous of all their chiefs. I knew that according to all calculation my life was not worth an hour's purchase in their hands ; and it may be conceived, with what anxiety I endeavoured to change the ketkhodah's purpose. Finding him, however, unmoved by all argument, I did not stoop to unworthy entreaty ; so merely telling him that my blood would be on his head, I rose and surrendered myself to my captors. I will not deny, that my heart sunk within me as I left the lighted chamber, to face the dark cold night, under such inauspicious guidance ; or that the retiring footsteps of the ketkhodah and his party, heartless as they were, fell on my ear like those of my last departing friends in this world.

The ketkhodah had scarcely left us, than the soldiers, seizing Seyed Allee and myself, stript off our sashes, and bound our arms with them, tightly above the elbows. " What is the meaning of

this?" said I to the chief, who was mounting his horse close by. "Where is the horse you promised me? I am in no state to travel without him." A loud laugh was the unfeeling answer. "A horse, forsooth! Oh! yes, you shall have a horse no doubt! Come, there is one worth an hundred tomauns down by the river side; come and mount him." And in this way they pulled me savagely onwards. I now saw that the moderation with which we had been hitherto treated, had been only assumed to get us quietly out of the house, and I prepared myself as well as I could for the worst usage. It came soon enough: my shoes were slipshod, and I was not even permitted to put them to rights, when I was dragged forward, and on attempting to resist, was saluted by several sound blows across the shoulders. The chief was not far off, and I appealed to him, but he, feigning not to hear me, cantered forwards out of call. Meanwhile the men who had Seyed Allee in charge went on before, so that we were entirely separated; and I was left alone with two completely-armed, strong, truculent looking-fellows in a wild pass, and in as dark a night as I ever beheld.

Wearied as I had been with three days' constant travelling, unrefreshed by a single night's repose, I was ill prepared to retrace my steps for twenty miles, with my blistered ill-shod feet, and hands bound behind me. My rude guards, however, had no feelings of compassion, and urged me on, stumbling at every step, over the rocky ground that led to the river; and when pain or weariness forced me to stop for a moment, a fresh allowance of blows, and sundry punches in the side with a sharp stick, seasoned with the most significant threats, forced me on again. Fording the river was so difficult a task, that even my guards were compelled to move slowly, and after more than one narrow escape from a tumble, the consequences of which, with my tight-bound arms, I could never have escaped, we reached the other side in safety, and entered the desert of sand-hills beyond.

And here, I conjectured, that my ruffianly guards meant to perpetrate the deed for which I concluded they must have taken me from the village. Amidst the quick succession of distracting and

painful occurrences which had just passed, I had still time to consider what might be the meaning of these rough measures, and their probable issue. Had the government of Resht meant merely to apprehend and reconduct me to my confinement, would they not in all probability have sent a party of gholaums, or special messengers belonging to the court, with order to spare unnecessary ill-usage? Was it likely they would have employed for this service a band of the fiercest robbers of the Talish hills, who seldom take a prisoner alive, except in hopes of ransom? Was it not, therefore, but too reasonable to think, that government, in entrusting the execution of my arrest to such hands, were at best but careless about the safety of their prisoner; or even that it was their wish his life should be taken? Such a measure, it was evident, would save them much trouble, if they had found themselves in the wrong with regard to my detention; while my flight through such a wild district would excuse, and sufficiently account for my fate. If, on the other hand, as had more than once occurred to me, the king or the princes thought I had seen too much of the country, and had no wish I should carry my information out of it, was not this a simple means of getting rid of me, as they had before done of M. Browne? And, finally, as it would not have answered their purpose to perpetrate the deed in a village of Azerbijan, from whence it might reach the ears of those from whom they would desire to conceal it, had they not contrived a very ingenious way of inveigling me beyond its walls, into a desert where no one would probably ever hear of my fate, or discover my remains?

These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, as my guards hurried me into the remoter part of the sand-hills; but I was soon recalled to myself by their suddenly making a halt. They now both seized me, and plunging their hands into my pockets began to rifle their contents, amusing themselves all the while, by laughing in my face, as my clothes gave way before their violence, and addressing me in the coarsest abuse. They took my money, my packet of medicines, a small case of instruments, which, with some other valuables, I wore suspended round my neck. My journal, sketch-book, and

papers, most fortunately they cared not for, and left in the pocket where they had been deposited. During this time, I did not omit to reason with them, and used all my endeavours to pacify them ; they silenced me with severe blows on the face and mouth, and asked me if the trouble I had cost them in catching me, in coming thirty miles from their homes, was not a sufficient reason to make them put me to death. Their rage seemed to increase as they spoke, and at last they pulled me so rudely by the sash which bound my arms, that I fell on the ground ; when one of them, drawing his Gheclanec knife, exclaimed with an oath, that kill me he would ; that he would cut my head off and leave it to the birds. At this moment, I fully expected death ; my thoughts glanced rapidly homewards, and to all I had left ; and then with something of a shudder to the great change before me, and the awful presence I was about to enter ; such, however, was the powerful excitement of my mind at the time, that the horror I felt was, in fact, much less than, in reflecting upon it since, I could have thought possible. A short prayer was on my lips, and I believe I closed my eyes, but I could not and did not attempt resistance.

This unpleasant predicament did not last long ; for whether the ruffian was not in the vein for slaughter, or was withheld by fear of possible consequences, and only wished to terrify me, I know not ; but he sheathed his sword, and taking his cudgel, began again to drub me at an unmerciful rate, desiring me to rise and go on. The immediate danger of my life seemed to be over for the present, and their mood changed to savage mirth. It was abundantly wild, yet not without a touch of the ludicrous, to hear the torrents of abuse and oaths which they showered upon me, seasoned with blows quite capriciously given. They vied with each other in inventing the most opprobrious expressions, and asking me the grossest questions, such as in Persia constitute the deepest insults, and shouted at their own wit, particularly when they thought any thing touched their victim. They then changed their tone to threats of what Mahomed Khan would do, when he got me into his power ; I should certainly lose my eyes, they said, or my tongue, or ears, or very probably even my head.

I stifled my feelings of indignation as well as I could, and only replied, that I was in their power, and could not help myself; they might do what they pleased, but that I had never injured them, and knew not for my life why they should take so much trouble to abuse me. Seeing, however, that this had no other effect than to exasperate them, I held my tongue; upon which, most perversely, they pretended to be offended at my silence, and struck me till I replied. By degrees, they became themselves wearied of persecuting me, and went on in sulky silence, only now and then sharply twitching me by the rope, or giving me a gentle hint with their clubs, when I stopped or slackened in my pace.

Morning broke at last, and we found ourselves not far from Gheeleewan. The chief, and those who conducted Seyed Allee, now halted, that we might join them; and I informed him of the robbery which his servants had committed on my person, with the ill-usage I had suffered, all of which I assured him should be reported to his master, or the next authorities I met. He taxed my guards with their theft, but they denied it; on which he turned to me and said, "You hear what they say; you must be mistaken." Nevertheless, I saw that his suspicions and cupidity were awakened, the more particularly as I let him know exactly what had been taken. As to the ill-usage and insults, no notice whatever was taken of them. At this place, however, the shawls which tied us were so far relaxed that we could move our arms; we were permitted to drink and wash; I got my shoes more comfortably fastened; and we now moved onwards in greater ease. Being in one party, our guards did not exercise their skill in tormenting so much; the stick was less frequently plied, and we soon reached the village of Gheeleewan.

Our entry was attended by all the pleasant consequences of our situation. The rabble of the place crowded around us, loudly expressing their wonder and amazement. We were taken to the house of the ketkhodah, and sufficiently abused for our flight, and for the trouble we had cost them in retaking us. I made a complaint to the ketkhodah himself, against the ill-usage I had suffered, and appealed to him as an English subject for protection, demanding, as

before, to be carried before Mahomed Koolee Khan. Very fortunately, my papers having escaped the plunder of my other property, I was enabled to produce them in support of my assertions. The sight of them, I was glad to see, had a powerful effect on the ketkhodah. He no sooner read my passports, than he turned to the chief of my guards, saying, " You have done very wrong ; this is not " a person to be so shamefully misused ; you should have protected " him, and prevented such conduct." When I spoke of the robbery, he desired me to point out the culprits, and when I had done so, he assured me that every thing should be restored ; but that I must be taken in the mean time to the yeilak of Mahomed Khan, whose men had made me prisoner ; but that care should be taken that no violence was used to me ; on the contrary, that every indulgence possible should be granted. It was plain, this ketkhodah was a person in some authority, and respected by those who were present ; I therefore again called upon him to exert that authority, in preventing me from being carried to the mountains, and to send me to Mahomed Koolee Khan, who I had now discovered to be at Hero. But although desirous to serve me, and, as it appeared, aware that I was improperly detained, he would not interfere in this way, and absolutely refused of taking charge of me himself ; he showed me all the kindness he could, gave us some bread and cheese and sour milk to eat, and on my representing my inability from weariness to re-ascend the mountains, he promised to procure for me a mule, the hire of which I pledged myself should be paid. He seemed even to think that Mahomed Khan himself would not venture to detain me ; and told me, if he let me go, to return to him, and he would see me furnished with guides, cattle, and every thing to expedite my journey towards Tabreez. This was the extent of indulgence I could procure ; and seeing that further remonstrance was in vain, I prepared once more to climb the mountain.

We had reached Gheeleeewan a little after sun-rise, and were detained there about an hour ; during which time heavy clouds had settled on the mountains, indicating bad weather. A mule was brought, with a paloo, or pack-saddle, on which I was mounted, my

arms being unbound ; but no animal was to be had for poor Seyed Allee, who was forced to accompany his guards on foot ; but they loosed him also, only keeping the sash tied round one arm in one of their own hands ; and every thing being thus arranged, we left the village.

Our road proved to be the same we had come down the evening before ; but we had not proceeded far upon it, when a drizzling rain set in, accompanied with a bitter cold wind ; which, in our light dresses, unprotected by any sort of cloak, chilled us through and through. We were, of course, soon drenched to the skin ; and finding it impossible from the severity of the cold to sit the mule, I gave it to Seyed Allee ; who, being warmer from the exertion of walking, but much wearied, was glad of the change ; and thus we continued climbing the hill, till we became enveloped in a dense fog, the wind and rain having also greatly increased. Seyed Allee in his turn got benumbed ; and, worn out with fatigue, I once more tried it ; but it would not do, the cold was too intense for us to sit it, and we abandoned the animal to the guides.

By this time we had attained our greatest height, and passing over the shoulder of a hill, we reached the first yeilak. My guards here stopped for refreshment, and we had to undergo the abusive reproaches of the whole tribe. But the guards had been changed for others who were somewhat less savage than the former ones, or possibly they had received stricter orders to avoid severity ; so that I had not blows to complain of from them ; they only urged me on while marching, with pretty plentiful abuse.

From this yeilak we descended by precipitous paths, which I could not have conceived passable for any animal but a sheep or goat ; so much so, that in several places I was forced to hold with both hands and feet ; yet I saw people lead mules and horses down the worst places in perfect safety. We passed many mountain torrents, running through noble forests of oaks, elms, sycamores, and ash. Whole tiers of great trees lay across the ravines, broken down by the overwhelming force of snow. The course of avalanches might be traced by the ruin they had caused ; and slips from the

mountain-side had carried whole acres, with the forest that grew upon them, into the chasms below. The howling of the wind, the roaring of the mountain cataracts, and the occasional fall of rocks loosened from their beds, formed altogether a combination of sounds in excellent keeping with the wild scenery of this most unpleasant journey.

At length we reached the yeilak of Mahomed Khan, the chief of this district. Some large enclosures of rough wood logs marked that we were again approaching the abodes of man; and a few small detached huts, built of logs, the interstices of which were stuffed with moss and bark, and thatched with wood split into the form of rude shingles, formed the habitations of this mountain-chief and his family. Here our guards halted; and while some of them went forward to apprize the khan of our approach, the others once more bound our arms together with our sashes, but less tightly than before.

Presently we were brought into the great man's presence. He turned round to look at us, and uttered some abusive expression; upon which signal our guards, in a moment drawing our bands tighter, began to belabour us both with short thick sticks, in a way which made me think they meant to beat us to death. Seyed Allee, losing courage, began to roar aloud, and swear that he was not in fault; and I cried out loudly: "Khan! Khan! spare that unfortunate; look at these papers which I have here to show you, and afterwards do with us what you think fit." On this they stopt; and the khan slowly muttered, "Ah, wretch! what papers can you have, that should induce me to spare either him or you? Bring them along with me."

With that he then rose and walked to another hut, to which we, still bound, were also taken. Here we found one of the prince's gholams who had been sent in chase of us, and had brought the order which had induced the Talish mountaineers to use such diligence in pursuit of us. "Ah! my friend," cried the khan, addressing him, "here they are; here, we have brought them all the way from Dees, in the country of Abbas Meerza; what think you of that?"

“ Who but the Talish could have done this? and who, even among
“ them, but my brave fellows, who would have taken them from the
“ very gates of Tabreez. Well, if this be not worth a khelut to me,
“ you will do me little justice.” “ Barick illah! Barick illah,” cried
the gholaum; “ by the head of the shahzadeh, by the head of the
“ king, you have done well, you have done wonders! Can it be?
“ Are they here? By my own head, and by yours, I swear that the
“ shahzadeh shall know of your merits.” And thus they went for
several minutes mutually uttering compliments, oaths, and protest-
ations; the mountain-chief magnifying the importance and difficulty
of his achievement, the other swearing the prince should know of
and appreciate the khan’s merits. At last, turning to me, he ex-
claimed, “ Tell me, unhappy wretch, what tempted you to this
“ deed? How could you dream of such an act, and how did you
“ do it? You must have had guides, and not only that, but wings.”
“ Khan,” replied I, “ I am an English gentleman, who have been
“ long travelling in Persia, through the whole of which I have met
“ with favour and protection until I came to Gheelan. I have bu-
“ siness with the English ambassador at Tabreez, to which city I
“ was hastening some time ago, after having procured from Allee
“ Reza Meerza the passport which I now tender you. I was after-
“ wards uselessly and unjustly detained by him at Resht, when I
“ thought proper to make my escape, as you have seen. This is the
“ truth, and these papers will prove it.”

The khan took the papers and handed them to a meerza, the
tutor of his two sons, who were all in the hut along with the gho-
laum. The meerza declared their import, which agreeing with my
story, the khan could not pretend ignorance any longer of my real
character, but, gradually relaxing his severity to a cheerful tone,
began to praise my dexterity and boldness in effecting my escape.
“ You could not,” remarked he, “ have known what you undertook,
“ or you would have never dared to attempt it; and yet (to the
“ gholaum) you see they made it out to Khal-Khal. By the life of
“ my father, they must have had guides; it was not possible other-
“ wise; and as for walking, it is ten fursungs to Dees from the

“ place where they passed the night before last ; and over such
“ mountains ! Walking ! they must have had wings ! By the head
“ of the prince, if this does not bring me a handsome khelut, I shall
“ never serve him again. And as for you,” said he to me, “ the
“ prince will certainly give you a handsome present for your bold
“ attempt, and upon my word you well deserve it. But as for you,
“ unhappy wretch,” turning to Seyed Allee, “ how could you dare
“ to do this thing ? A topechee too, a servant of the prince, and a
“ seyed, to crown all ! What will he not do to you ? ” The poor
fellow was dreadfully alarmed, and began to swear he had neither
guided me nor in any way assisted me ; upon which I explained to
the khan, that the man was no topechce, nor in the service of the
prince ; on the contrary, the native of a distant province, who had
been for a long time my own servant, and therefore bound to obey
my orders ; that I had not informed him of my intention to leave
Resht till the moment of putting my plan into execution ; and, con-
sequently, so far was he from having the power of preventing me,
that he could not, had he been ever so desirous, have given inform-
ation of my project. As to guides, so far from having received
assistance in that way from him or any one else, we had wandered
among the jungles of the low country for a whole day for want of a
guide, otherwise by this time we should have been near Tabreez.
“ Do you hear what he says ? ” cried the khan : “ Did I not say he
“ must have had wings ? What do you think of me now for catch-
“ ing him ? ” And then we had to listen to another string of flattery
and compliments between the two worthy associates in this gallant
enterprise.

I complained to the khan of the blows and ill-usage I had met
with from his servants, but he took all this very lightly. “ Oh ! ”
said he, “ they are thoughtless young fellows ; they did not know
“ who you were ; you must forgive them, for my sake.” I replied,
that, prisoner as I was, and totally in his power, I could insist on
nothing ; that what I told him appeared to concern his own honour
more than mine ; if he did not think that affected by consenting to
such ill-usage to a person in some degree under his protection, I

would say no more. I then mentioned the robbery, and gave a list of the money and things I had lost, pointing out at the same time the persons who had committed it. He asked them if all this were true, and they, as might have been expected, instantly gave me the lie direct.* “You hear what they say,” rejoined the khan. But as it was evident that neither restitution nor justice was to be had here, I said no more, except to beg, that, if the little silver case of instruments, and a small trinket which I valued highly, were recovered, they might be restored to me, and I would give the full value to the finder. The khan only replied, that I might think myself very lucky, under all circumstances, in not having been stript naked, or even in escaping with my life, and had better say no more on the subject. I now saw the kind of man I had to deal with, and only remarked that it was well; my next representation on the subject should be addressed to the authorities at Tehran.

I was not aware at the time, nor indeed did I find out till long afterwards, that I had suffered a robbery from this savage, which proved a greater loss to me than the value of all that his servants had taken, and which I never could have suspected him of having a desire to perpetrate. Among the articles I had along with me, I have mentioned a sketch-book. This contained many drawings of costume, particularly of Toorkoman men and women, several portraits of persons I had become acquainted with, and a number of studies both of animals and groups, intended as memorandums for future drawings of the country. When the papers taken from my pocket were handed to the khan, this was among the rest. He asked me to give it to him, which I refused; upon which he turned to the gholaum and observed, “You see now what the Feringhees travel for; it is to take likenesses of the country, that they may know hereafter how to take possession of it; he has been commissioned

* Darogh ust, gou khoord ust, “It is a lie; he has eaten dirt,” was the expression, and one in constant use among themselves, without conveying any uncommon degree of contempt or insult. The latter part of the expression has been most humourously and characteristically introduced, more than once, in that excellent picture of Persian life, “The Adventures of Hadjee Baba.”

“ by his government to take these drawings, no doubt.” He then asked me as a favour to let him show the figures of the men and women to his wife, which I, unsuspecting of his intention, permitted; and, during the time it was thus taken out of my sight, he managed to tear out about a dozen leaves, containing the most highly-finished and valuable figures. It was not till after I had left Resht a second time that I discovered this irreparable loss.

We were now asked if we wished to eat any thing; and some cold rice, fresh cheese, and honey being placed before us, we refreshed ourselves while drying our clothes by a large fire. I was at this time alarmed by hearing the gholaum tell one of the attendants to see if the horses were ready; on which I turned to the khan, and requested that he would not permit us to be removed until the next day; that within the last four days we had travelled nearly a hundred and fifty miles, and for three nights past had never slept a wink, consequently we were exceedingly weary. I hoped, therefore, he would permit us to lodge with him for one night, to recruit our strength. The khan swore he had no place to put us in, nor room enough even for his own family. The gholaum, on the other hand, as vehemently asserted that *he* must sleep this night at a village below the hills, and be in Resht early next morning. They promised me a horse; and, seeing me uneasy on account of my servant, who had walked even more than I had done, the gholaum promised to *press* the first horse we should meet for him. It was in vain to remonstrate; the khan was quite as anxious to get rid of me as the gholaum was to get me into his clutches; all I petitioned for was a covering to defend me from the rain and cold wind, which continued to blow with unremitting violence. A miserable bashlogue or riding-hood was brought me, which covered little more than the head and shoulders, leaving the rest of my body quite exposed. I was mounted on a sorry pony, furnished with an old pack-saddle without stirrups, and a halter instead of a bridle. Seyed Allee was placed between two of the khan's men on foot, one of whom still held the sash bound round one arm. In this order, in a tempest of wind and rain, we left this

inhospitable ruffian in his inclement region, and turned our faces once more towards Gheelān.

I now learned the circumstances which had led to our recapture : it appeared that I had been missed late in the evening of my departure, and strict inquiries had been made of John as to where I had gone. I had desired him, in case of an early discovery of my absence, to say I had gone to meet the prince, thus hoping still to mislead them, and to baffle pursuit ; but John had misunderstood or confused this order, so as to render the precaution ineffectual ; the alarm was given ; the darogha informed the vizier, who gave intimation to the prince's mother, and she ordered immediate steps to be taken for our apprehension. The whole palace was in an uproar ; three gholaums were ordered to set off in search of us early in the morning, and the rascals, as if to add to the bitterness of their insults, took my three favourite Arab horses, instead of their own, to pursue us with.

Contrary to what we supposed possible, they had traced us to Nishumbeh, when we left the public road ; then to Tooloo, Kishmah, and Teregoram, when they lost us for a time, but shortly afterwards fell in with one of those who had seen us making for the pass : Furz Allee-beg, the gholaum now in charge of us, had followed us in that direction, and ascending the pass not many hours after us, traced us to our resting place upon the top. Here my poor little Arab horse, unused to such mountains and such ill treatment, sunk under the gholaum's weight, who was forced after to proceed on foot to the yeilak of Mahomed Khan ; here he told his errand, and produced the order which had induced the Talish chief to send his people in pursuit of us.

Had we been able to get a few miles further, we should probably have been safe ; but Gheeleewan, Dees, and the other villages in the neighbourhood of the hills, are so much exposed to the outrages of the Talish clans, that they dare not disoblige them : thus, neither of the ketkhodahs would have ventured, whatever might have been their inclination, to oppose the force sent by Mahomed Khan, lest that chief, resenting such an affront, might have avenged it in a summary and perhaps sanguinary manner.

I was in hopes that at least we had done with ascents, but found that we had once more to climb the mountain, nearly to its top, that we might get into the same pass by which we had gone up yesterday : this was now more painful and difficult, because the rain had drenched the ground ; neither men nor horses could keep their feet. I was, however, comparatively well off. Unfortunate Seyed Allee had all the labour, which, in his exhausted state, I hardly expected him to surmount. At last the road began to descend ; and such a descent ! the shoes of those who walked soon failed, and were abandoned ; the mud was knee-deep, and the stones were so slippery that no one could keep his feet. We travelled, however, at a great rate ; the gholaum and his myrmidons were anxious to get to the end of their journey, and had no mercy upon us. I was anxious to keep back the horsemen, who pressed hard on my unhappy servant. I several times urged him to take a turn on the horse, but he always refused, saying that if he once got stiff, he should never be able to walk at all. My own situation, indeed, was not to be envied ; wet, cold, and stiff, my legs were numbed and almost void of sensation from hanging down, for want of stirrups ; my hands could hardly hold the halter to guide the pony down the difficult passes, and the rough old saddle kept me in perpetual torture. I thought the descent would never end.

My mind was not more at ease than my body. I was filled with gloomy apprehensions ; and even more on my servant's account than my own. Whatever might be intended towards myself, might probably be controlled by the fear of consequences, and the possibility of detection ; but for poor Seyed Allee, who now stood exposed to the wrath of the tyrannical government which had already treated me and mine with so little consideration, what had I not to dread ; what was to control the effects of its displeasure ? As a Persian subject, they might not consider that he was excused for assisting me, by the relation in which he stood to me ; his eyes, his hands, his head might be the forfeit, and indeed, both the khan and the gholaum had dropped hints of this kind.

At last, in a weary plight, we reached the bottom of the mountain ; but the gholaum declared his intention of pushing on to Tere-

goram this night ; a threat which greatly alarmed me, as I knew the distance, and that neither my servant nor myself could possibly support ourselves so long : he had got on behind me at the bottom of the descent, but after riding two miles, complained of pains and numbness in his legs, so much, that he got off again to walk ; I myself was almost unable to move, from cold, and I urgently represented this to Furz-Allee Beg, threatening that I would get off, and lie down where I was, if he did not choose to name some nearer place of rest for us. The party on foot I suspect had more influence than I ; they now declared it madness to proceed, and at last prevailed on Furz-Allee Beg to halt at a small village not far from Meer Muhuleh, our quarters on the second night of our flight.

We soon reached the house of the ketkhodah, where we found the two other gholaums who had been in search of me, seated comfortably at a large fire along with the ketkhodah, and some other travellers. Great were the rejoicings and congratulations on their part, and great the triumph of Furz-Allee Beg, who, cheered by the brilliant fire and comfortable repast in preparation, as well as by the sight of his companions over whom he was glad to crow, now no longer repined at being retarded in his progress, but relaxed into good humour and high spirits. The party surrounded us, and put a string of questions to the gholaum and myself ; “ How was it ? “ where did you find them ? where are you come from ? ” “ Ah ! thou “ pityless to thyself ! * what have you done ? what could induce you “ to this rash act ? &c. &c ”. I soon stopped them, as far as regarded myself, by saying that I would answer no questions except to the prince ; to whom, when I was brought before him, I should give my reasons for what I had done. “ Well, well, he is right ; ” said they, “ let him alone.” So they showed us into a room where there was a blazing fire, at which we dried our clothes, and bathed our swelled and wounded feet ; while Furz-Allee Beg entertained the others

* “ Ai bemuroowut waste khoodish ! ” which, literally translated as in the text, is a very common exclamation, used to those who have by their own imprudence brought themselves into danger or suffering.

with relating the circumstances of our capture, and his own great exploits.

The people of the village as well as the gholaums now treated us with considerable kindness ; when our clothes had been dried, we partook with them of an excellent dinner ; and I sat with them afterwards round the fire, listening to their account of the people among whom we had been. It appeared that Mahomed Khan, called *Massāul*, from the name of the village where he resides, is chief of the tribe of Kiskar Talish, who are very numerous, and have the character of being the most desperate and cruel ruffians of this wild country. They pay little or nothing to government, but own a slight degree of obedience to the prince of Gheclar ; and Mahomed Khan had lately been at Tehran in attendance on the king, and had just returned, having received leave to re-visit his country on account of real or pretended ill health.

It was said that he could muster several thousand men, all capital matchlockmen, fellows so careless about shedding blood, that, to use the words of the ketkhodah, they would put a dozen of men to death for two-pence, and all these men are as ready to perform the orders of their chief, as the clansmen of any Highland chief in Scotland : but the khan cannot venture to break their spirit, or rouse their ill-will by restraint, and rather encourages their savage propensities, as rendering them fearless, and fitter to perform the acts of plunder and rapine from which he derives much of his revenue. Both the ketkhodah and the gholaums told me, that they considered our escape from them with our lives as something wonderful ; and only to be attributed to the small quantity of valuables in our possession when taken. That as for orders to spare our lives, they would not have had the least effect, in case the men had found us prizes worth plundering ; they would have invented some tale of my having escaped their hands, or having fallen down a precipice, that they might keep the money unquestioned ; but that I never would have been heard of more : fear for their chief, who is cruel in his punishments when disobeyed, and the smallness of the prize, which was not worth the risk, alone saved me.

These gholaums are a class of troops, of which every prince, as well as the king, entertains a certain number. They are not, as their name imports, all purchased slaves ; for though some of them, like the mamluks of Egypt, may have been Georgian boys, purchased and brought up in the household, the greater number are adventurers, or cadets of good family, who are content to serve for pay, and the hope of promotion or lucrative employment, to which the situation is considered a sure path. Thus, though only ranking as common soldiers, the gholaums form, in truth, a corps d'elite, distinct from the other troops, like the household troops or mousquetaires of France in the time before the revolution.

These fellows are armed with a match or fire-lock, a sword, and pistols, and are mounted on a horse belonging to the prince they serve, who sends them to do his will on all occasions, and to whom they are expected to be devoted, however desperate the duty assigned them. They are the messengers employed on all occasions where speed and decision are required, and in the day of battle they must be ready to sacrifice their own lives to save that of their master.

Like most court dependents, they are almost, without exception, profligate and dissipated in the extreme ; they drink to excess, and indulge to the extent of their means in all sorts of debauchery. They are always drowned in debt, and bully their creditors and such unfortunate tradesmen as may be at their mercy, out of their money and their goods. Wherever they go, they are the terror of the country ; they live at free quarters, levy contributions on various pretences in the name of their master ; guides, horses, provisions, the house and its inmates must wait their pleasure ; and their only argument in case of remonstrance is the but-end of their fire-arms, or the cudgel they carry. None dares to resist, far less to attack a gholaum ; for dreadful would be his punishment if such an offender were carried before the prince. Thus the approach of a gholaum-e-shahee is a signal of terror which often depopulates a village, and sends its inhabitants to seek shelter in the mountains or the forest around.

June 20th. The morning, though cloudy, was fine, and we rose

to pursue our way after a night of little refreshment by sleep. I was now determined to insist on some attention being paid to Seyed Allee, whose feet were so sore that he could not walk. The gholaums promised to get us horses; but I had sufficient experience of that class of men to know how little their word was to be believed, and fairly told them, that unless we were provided with separate beasts, I should not stir.

I now had the mortification to see my own three horses brought out for the gholaums, while not a beast had been as yet procured for myself or servant. They had even the impudence to propose that I should mount behind one, and Seyed Allee behind another, and so proceed till we could press others on the road. But I told them, it would be at their peril if they overloaded my horses in this fashion; for I should make it a serious complaint to the prince. When we were about to set off, they again proposed to me to ride "en croupe" behind the ketkhodah, who was to accompany us on a horse of his own; but I positively refused to ride in this way at all; and seeing that no other horse could really be procured here, I made Seyed Allee mount behind the ketkhodah, while I followed on foot, until some animal should cast up.

We soon forded the river, which was much swollen by the late rains, and crossed the country through by-roads to the village Massāl, where Mahomed Khan has an excellent house, and lives in the winter months among his dependants like a prince. Here they fell in with the unfortunate pony which carried me down from the mountains the night before, and mounting me upon it, with Seyed Allee behind me, off we set helter-skelter for Teregoram.

They had promised me a horse to myself, as soon as they could get one; and accordingly, on the first sight of a mounted passenger, one of the gholaums darted forward at full speed, brought the poor fellow to, pushed him off his horse, tumbled all his lading on the ground, and called on me to mount. The sufferer turned out to be a countryman who was carrying some of his village produce to market at Teregoram; he remonstrated and entreated in vain; the gholaums lent a deaf ear; they dismissed the former yaboo, mounted

me upon the fresh horse, with Seyed Allee behind me, and off we scoured, leaving the unfortunate owner gaping and roaring, to look after his property lying strewed on the road, as he liked.

When we were near the bazar, they changed their plan ; they agreed that it would be loss of time to go there ; that they should meet plenty of yaboos on the road to Resht ; so we turned eastward, and off we set again. We soon found horsemen coming to the bazar, and as speedily dismounted two of them, placing us now on separate animals, and dismissing the one first seized. In this manner we proceeded, pressing and releasing, as occasion offered, all the way to Kishmah bazar.

Some of the poor fellows thus dispossessed of their property were in a distress that would have moved any one but a gholaum-e-shahee ; they ran after their yaboos, with cries and tears imploring mercy, and declaring they were ruined for ever. Others, perhaps more used to such occurrences, took it more philosophically ; and quietly followed the party, until another seizure restored them their property. I observed that the gholaums were always more obliging to such persons, and sooner relieved their cattle, than when a great outcry was made.

We halted more than an hour at Kishmah, to refresh ourselves, and endeavour to procure horses ; but as the gholaums never proposed to hire them, none were forthcoming ; and Furz-Allee Beg had several chases in vain after yaboos he saw approaching. During this time, we sat in the mosque with the ketkhodah, whom I found to be an intelligent traveller, and, though at first, like others, he began to reproach me for the folly I had committed, when he had heard my story, he confessed, that however unwise I had been, I had acted just as he should in similar circumstances have done himself.

At length, Furz-Allee Beg secured a single yaboo, on which Seyed Allee and myself were placed as before, and we resumed our way. Nothing further worth notice occurred on our way to Resht, where we arrived a little before sun-set. For the most part my servant and myself had but one horse between us, and though I had no particular harshness to complain of, I certainly could not congratu-

tulate myself greatly on the kindness or respect with which I was treated.

I took great pains during our journey to ascertain from the gholaums whether they had any particular orders relative to Seyed Allee, and if possible to learn what was likely to be his fate ; but I could obtain nothing from them, beyond obscure and rather alarming hints. I succeeded at last in obtaining a promise that he should not be separated from me ; and that nothing should be done, in so far as they were concerned, in the way of punishment, without my knowledge, or until his case had been fairly tried. They appeared surprised, but at the same time rather pleased, at the interest I expressed about the poor fellow, who on his part was in no small alarm. He begged that I would not permit him to quit me, and, above all, to see that he was not delivered over to the furoshes, whose brutal inhumanity makes every one in such a situation tremble.*

When crossing the Paswān river, the gholaums were anxious that I should identify the boatman who ferried me over, a thing I was determined not to do ; as the poor man would certainly not have escaped punishment for his involuntary crime. But he saved me the pain of prevaricating, by not appearing at all.

When we reached the bridge at the western entrance of Resht, the same which I had passed four days before with such different hopes, I dismounted from my yaboo, determined to walk through the town, rather than be displayed in so unseemly an equipage ; and that, as a spectacle must be exhibited to the good people of Resht, it might be as little ridiculous as possible. Our appearance, indeed, was not calculated to escape attention, or attract respect, for our clothes were torn to rags, and dragged with dirt and wet ; our persons were haggard, and sore wearied ; and we were escorted by three gholaums, on equally wearied horses, covered with dust and sweat. I felt, however, that the shame lighted on those who had occasioned such a display :

* It is not possible, consistently with due regard to decency, to describe the horrid outrages which this punishment involves.

every one knew my story, and I was well aware that most people considered me an oppressed person, while they had all more or less reason themselves to curse my oppressors.

On the way to the vizier's house, to which we were to be first taken, we met with Cossim Khan the darogha, who assailed me in the same strain as others :—" Ah ! hard-hearted and foolish as you are ! " Why have you committed this madness ? why have you behaved " so unkindly to all you left here behind you ; and given a bad " name to the prince, the governor, and myself ? " I silenced him, as I had others, by refusing to reply to such questions, and went with him to the vizier, followed by half the rabble of Resht.

Ahmed Khan was alone in his house when we entered, and he also attacked me ; but there seemed to be real uneasiness and sincerity in his expressions, when he upbraided me bitterly with what I had done as likely to affect his own life, and that of all who were charged with the care of looking after me. " Had you but waited " these four days," said he, " you need not have run this risk ; the " prince is now arrived, and you might have had your leave with all " honour and kindness ; and now," added he, " you are at liberty to " go where you please ; you may go to the prince, or pack up at " once and pursue your journey." I replied, that he had only himself to blame for what had happened, and all its consequences ; that had I found him ready to listen to my reasonable remonstrances, and to give me true information, instead of telling me falsehoods, and amusing himself with jeering me ; had he either forwarded myself or my petitions to the prince, nothing of what he now deprecated would have occurred ; but, that despairing of any attention being paid to my requests, seeing the prince's return put off indefinitely, and reports of even a very long absence prevailing ; cruelly injured in my private affairs by so long a detention, and uncertain even of what fate might be in store for me, from the strange hostility of his own and his master's conduct, I had no alternative in my power, but the flight that had been attempted.

I then enquired where I was to be taken. " You are quite free," said he ; " you may go where you please ; perhaps you had better

“ go to your old lodging to refresh this night ; and to-morrow, if you
“ please, you may go and meet the prince, as you wished to do ; he
“ will to-morrow be very near town.” He then ordered one of my
own horses to be given me to ride, and was dismissing me, when I
told him that Seyed Allee must accompany me, as I had pledged
myself to him that force alone should take him from me. He
demurred at this, and seemed desirous to get my servant into his
hands ; saying, he would give me a better man in his place ; but when
he saw me resolute, when I reminded him that the man having,
according to the Persian expression, “ *eaten my salt*,” had but done
his duty in obeying my orders ; that he did not know of my inten-
tions till the moment they were to be put into execution ; moreover,
that to take from me my servant would be an aggravation to the
insults already offered to me ;—he gave up the point, and said,
“ Take him with you, take him by all means ; not a hair of his head
“ shall be touched ; we do not mean to injure you ; why should we
“ hurt him ?”

It was plain that the minister's tone was altered, that his spirits
were low ; there was none of the taunting, jeering manner, which
marked our former interviews ; he was subdued, pensive, alarmed. I
could only attribute this change to some news he had learnt, or some
apprehensions he entertained as to the consequences of his own con-
duct, either generally, or with regard to me in person.

I was stiff and sore, and could hardly mount the horse that
carried me once more back to my prison at Hadjee Meeer Ismael's,
where no welcome awaited me, except from my own servants ; but
glad at least of rest, I bathed my swelled and bruised limbs, and
after a slight repast, got into my bed, and, for the first time for many
days, was refreshed with a sound sleep.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE EIDE.—FURTHER PARTICULARS RESPECTING, AND CONSEQUENCES OF, THE AUTHOR'S RECAPTURE.—THE PRINCE ARRIVES AT RESHT.—A MAN BADLY WOUNDED.—BROUGHT TO THE AUTHOR.—MEERZA TUCKEE THE MINISTER.—AUTHOR VISITS HIM—AND RELATES HIS STORY, WHICH IS FAVOURABLY HEARD.—NEGOCIATIONS FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCE.—THE INTERVIEW.—IS PROMISED REDRESS.—THE GOODS STOLEN BY THE TALISHI HIGHLANDERS RESTORED TO THE AUTHOR.—HE RECEIVES THE PRINCE'S PRESENT, AND IS DISMISSED.—TAKES LEAVE OF MEERZA REZA, AND HADJEE MOOLLA BABA.

JUNE 21. This being the day of the eide, which succeeds the ramazān, the town was all in a bustle, which was increased by the expected arrival of the prince. I intended to have gone to meet him, but having more certain intelligence that he was still at a greater distance than was at first supposed, and being still weary from excessive exertion, I gave up that plan for the time.

Meerza Reza visited me in the forenoon, and I related to him all my adventures, while he, on his part, informed me of all that regarded the discovery of my flight, and the measures taken for pursuing me. It appeared that all my horses, five in number, had been put in requisition; first, the three gholaums had been mounted, and set off, and afterwards the other two had been ordered out on some other service; but John remonstrated violently, and when he found that ineffectual, went to Meerza Reza, who represented to the minister the inutility as well as danger of risking two valuable animals upon a service in which they might be injured, and when their value must sooner or later be required at his hands. The minister thought better of the matter, and ordered them to be sent back to the meadow.

The meerza, when I described to him the conduct of the two ketkhodahs of Gheeleeewan and Dees, regretted much that he had not given me a letter addressed generally to the superiors of all villages in Abbas Meerza's country, charging them to render me all possible assistance. This, he said, would have prevented them from giving me up to the order of any one but their master the prince of Azerbaijan, and saved me the mortification of a recapture; but I doubt this. I think the awe in which these people stood of the Tālish mountaineers would not have been overruled by the questionable order of their master's servant, even admitting their power to resist the force of the party which brought me back. He also assured me, that, upon representation to Abbas Meerza, or his minister the Caimukan, there was not a doubt that the two ketkhodahs would be punished.

The meerza also informed me of a circumstance which accounted sufficiently for the altered tone of the vizier Ahmed Khan. The prince, he said, was certainly within a day's journey of Resht, and was accompanied by Meerza Tuckee, whom he had chosen, or who had been given him by the king, as his confidential minister. This gentleman, it seems, was a person of high consideration at court, who had been on intimate and friendly terms with the English residing at Tehran. It was also understood that he came vested with high powers to conciliate and regulate the discontents in Gheelan, and with feelings by no means favourable to Ahmed Khan, or the party, who, for some time, had been in office. It was therefore supposed, that in the reference which would be made to the prince regarding me, he would take my part against Ahmed Khan, and his master prince Allee Reza Meerza. If this were true, it sufficiently accounted for Ahmed Khan's low spirits.

The meerza advised me strongly against going to visit the prince before he entered Resht. He observed, that, as the prince had neither a sufficient attendance, nor a proper place for receiving strangers, if I were even to go to his camp, I should probably not get admittance to his person, so jealous are all these princes of appearing to strangers in a style they conceive to be inconsistent with

their dignity ; and if I should thus fail, he conceived that it would be disreputable to myself, and disadvantageous to my cause. The meerza being so much better acquainted than I could be with the feelings and motives of the great men of his country, I acquiesced in his reasons, and resolved to follow his advice. He told me, moreover, that, as it was his duty to go along with the istackbāl, or deputation always sent out by a town or a city to meet and attend the entrance of a prince, he should take care to seize any opportunity that might occur of telling him my story, and preparing him for receiving me.

I was the more easily reconciled to putting off my interview with the prince, which indeed was only desirable as a means of expediting my departure, by discovering, that, in consequence of the fatigue and ill-usage we had suffered, neither my horses nor myself would be able to travel for several days ; for they had been all severely galled, and I was so bruised and lame as hardly to be able to stand ; so I had no alternative but to acquiesce in a further delay.

June 22. The prince, who this day marched to Codām, a village about two fursungs from Resht, being certainly to make his entry on the morrow, the town was in a great hurry of preparation. Sweetmeats were made ready in quantities, to be put into glass bottles for throwing under his horse's feet ; and several bullocks and sheep were to be beheaded as he should pass along.

I found already a great difference in the degree of respect and attention paid me by the people of the town, attributable no doubt to political changes. The darogha Cossim Khan this day paid me a visit, and entertained me with an account of the preparations for the prince's arrival. Although he approached from the east of the town, his entry was to be made from the western side, by the Subzee Maidān. There were, it appeared, some stars of malignant aspect in that quarter, which it was important should be kept in the rear while entering the town ; and for this reason the prince was to make a large circuit, that he might comply with the rules prescribed by the royal astrologers, and enter under a lucky influence.

June 23. About noon, the istackbāl, consisting of the vizier and

all the courtiers, the chief men of the city and merchants, with abundance of horsemen and toffunchees, went out to meet the prince, who made his entry about five in the afternoon. I was sorry I could not witness it. The state of my feet alone would have prevented me from moving ; but I was detained by a more unfortunate occurrence connected with the gay spectacle that had passed. A young man, one of the toffunchees belonging to the town, who attended the istackbāl, was brought to me with his hand shattered to pieces by the accidental explosion of his matchlock. When the business was over, he had put into it four iron slugs, intending to kill some bird with them ; but, unfortunately, as he leant his right hand carelessly on the muzzle, the butt resting on the ground, the piece went off, and the whole charge passed through the hand.

The moment the accident happened, and his companions became aware of the injury sustained, they cried, “ Oh ! bring him to the elchee ; he will cure him ; he is the only one that can ; ” so they straitway brought him to my lodging. When I first saw him, the poor fellow was in great agony ; for, besides the pain of the wound, the explosion had burnt him severely. The whole hand was so swelled and disfigured, it was impossible to tell the extent of the injury ; while, at the same time, it was easy to see that it was serious and extensive ; in fact, I never saw a more ugly and alarming case, and I was perfectly at a loss how to proceed. I had not the least doubt that a European surgeon would have instantly proceeded to amputate the limb, as the only way to save the patient ; but this being an operation far beyond my skill, and knowing how well the natives of eastern countries recover from the most desperate wounds, I hoped it might just be possible that this poor fellow might preserve both his life and his hand ; and I set myself to consider the most likely way of assisting nature. The hand was so scorched and hard for the present, that nothing could be done until softened in some degree. I therefore washed it gently with warm water, and, wrapping it in cloth, directed it to be kept constantly wet with milk-warm water, which was more grateful to the feeling than cold ; and, to allay the great pain and restlessness he felt, I

gave him, in about an hour after, thirty drops of laudanum. This producing no effect, in three hours more I gave him forty in addition, directing acidulous drinks to be given in case of thirst, and left him for the night.

June 24. Meerza Reza informed me that he had not been able to speak to the prince respecting me, but had told my whole story to Meerza Tuckee the minister, from whom he understood that the prince was quite ignorant of my detention all the while, and would no doubt be highly displeased when he should hear of it, but that he would himself soon send for me and hear my story. The meerza added, that he had no doubt justice would be done me, but that I must not be in a hurry.

This day the palace gates were crowded with persons from all parts, thronging to make their salaam to the prince. The bustle was great, and I supposed every one was fully occupied, for I did not receive the expected communication, either from Meerza Reza or the minister, till the evening; when, after several messages, which, I believe, went no further than his servants, a person was sent to bring me to the levee, which he held after that of the prince's and other public business was over.

My host the hadjee accompanied me to the minister, who received me, as I thought, coolly enough, and motioned me to take a very low place. There was a large assemblage seated around, in which he occupied the chief place. It was some time before he dispatched the business of several other persons present, and I had time to consider the man from whom I had been encouraged to hope for justice. He was a little, high-shouldered man, with sharp features, an acute and rather good-humoured expression, rendered more intelligent by a pair of keen small eyes; but the haughty carriage, so characteristic of Persian office, supplied the want of natural dignity in his address to inferiors, and mingled more or less even with his smiling condescension when he conversed with those of superior rank.

When at leisure, he addressed himself to me, and enquired of me who I was, English or French, where I had been, what I had seen,

how I liked the country, and where they had treated me well, where the contrary. I satisfied him as to all these particulars, and, in answer to the last, assured him I had been treated with distinction and kindness every where, even among the wildest tribes of Khorasān, until I came to Ghcelān, where I had met with nothing from the authorities of government but oppression and insult. He appeared to be struck with this assertion, and requested me to say how that could have been, and to tell my own story. I replied, that it was not a tale that could be told in a few words, or fit to be related in so public a manner ; but that, if he would honour me with a private audience, I should tell him the whole truth as shortly as possible. " Well," said he, " come to-morrow morning at sun-rise, and " I will attend to all you have to say. You are an Englishman, and " a friend of M. Willock, who is my friend, and you must be so " likewise." I bowed to this and left the assembly, but little pleased with the assumed hauteur and slight attention of the minister, who, except when I was just taking leave, had not favoured me with one kind or encouraging expression.

My patient had passed a restless and distressing night ; the pain had been great, and the swelling had increased. The whole arm was now fomented, and the wounds further cleared from the mass of clotted blood and dirt ; but it was totally impossible as yet to discover the extent of the injury.

In the evening he was considerably better ; the swelling reduced and more local ; the pain and restlessness diminished ; but there was some fever, and the pulse was pretty full. The same treatment was continued, but I thought it right to give him a sleeping-draught at night.

From this time until that of my departure, the young man continued to get better, though slowly, and with occasional threatenings of danger. At one time these became so serious, that I thought it necessary to prepare his family for the worst. I explained to them the apprehensions to be entertained from the two probable contingencies of lock-jaw and gangrene, and warned them, that, though I was as anxious as possible for his recovery, all my efforts might be

in vain ; in which case I must protest against any blame being imputed to me ; that if, under these circumstances, they preferred to employ their own physicians, I should at once give way to them, but in that case could not again act in the matter, and that they must consider well before they should decide on the course to be pursued. They assured me that they were too thankful for my care ; observed that the cure was in the hands of God, and that they only hoped I would continue to act for the best in promoting it.

I believe, poor creatures, that they were really grateful ; they were at all events most anxious about their relative ; for, as I returned from his house one afternoon, an old man of the family came up behind me, and, touching my sleeve to attract attention, suddenly took my hand, and, putting it to his head, exclaimed, in a voice deeply affected, “ For God’s sake save that poor wretch’s arm ; “ we know you can ; do it, and you shall have twelve tomauns.” It may be supposed that I lost no time in assuring him there was no need of his twelve tomauns to induce me to exert myself, but that the cure was in higher hands. He understood and believed me, for he turned and went his way with a fervent “ Khodah Hafiz.”

By the time I was quitting Resht, the wounds had assumed a more favourable appearance. I left a few medicines, with some plain directions, calculated to promote a cure, which, several weeks after my arrival at Tabreez, I had the satisfaction to learn was nearly completed, and that hopes were entertained that the poor fellow would even preserve a tolerable use of his hand. I had the curiosity to inquire how the native physicians would have treated this case, and was informed that they probably would have applied a mixture of certain salts and earths, the exact composition I forget ; but it was of so acrid a quality, that it would have infallibly driven the man distracted with pain, and brought on speedy gangrene to end his torture.

June 25th. I went about six this morning to wait on Meerza Tuckee, and though he was at prayers when I arrived, I was immediately shown up stairs into his private room, where he bid me take a seat until he should be finished. His prayers took up some little

time, during which, he at intervals addressed a kind observation to me ; his manner was greatly changed, it was now all graciousness. He prefaced the audience, by observing to me that M. Willock was a particular friend of his, and that as I was that gentleman's friend also, I must fully confide in him, and tell him every thing that had taken place. Thus encouraged, I related to him what had happened to me, from first to last, during which, he asked me many questions, made me repeat several circumstances over again, and was, or appeared to be, much shocked and surprized. I then showed him all my papers, which he carefully perused.

When he had fully satisfied himself, he told me he would lose no time in letting the prince know what had happened, and pledged himself that all should be made right : he desired me to make out a written list of the things taken from me by Mahomed Khan Massaul ; said that he would himself see my horses, and if any of them had been wounded, or rendered unfit to pursue the journey, he would see to finding a remedy. I told freely of the shabby treatment and neglect I had suffered from mine host, the hadjee ; adding the fact, that I had been forced to purchase all the food required for myself and my servants, during the time of my detention, as well as before it ; and that consequently my finances had run so short, I feared I should not have a sufficient sum to carry me to Tabreez. To all this, and several other observations of mine, he remarked, that the country had been in a troubled state ; that there had been great discontents and abuses ; the master had been absent, and the servants had gone astray ; that I must forget and forgive a great deal of what I had suffered, under the explanation now given ; that it had not been inflicted by the prince's wish, but contrary to his desire ; and that he now would be disposed to make every thing up to me, and no doubt, would dismiss me with marks of his bounty. I could reply but little to this, further than by thanking the minister for the interest he had taken in my case, and expressing a hope that the prince would consider the long and ruinous detention I had already suffered, and not protract the period of my departure beyond what might be necessary.

One thing I felt it proper to premise to the minister ; which was, that if the prince admitted me to an audience, I should be allowed a

seat. This, the minister said, was impossible, because his royal highness had made a positive rule against such an indulgence. I replied, that in that case, I should entreat to be excused from waiting upon him ; as he must be aware it was a privilege granted to all Englishmen who visit princes of the blood ; that I had enjoyed it at Shiraz, at Tehrān, at Khorasān, and Mazunderān ; and conceived that I should be betraying, as it were, the honour of my country, as far as an individual could so do, if I admitted in my own person of any unusual slight whatever. The minister, upon this positive adherence to my point, smiled, and said ; “ Well, well, we shall see what is to be “ done ; ” so again thanking him for his friendly conduct, I took my leave.

It may be proper here to enlarge a little more upon the reasons which induced me to insist so strongly upon what many may deem a trifle of no consequence, but which in Persia is really a matter of serious importance. Etiquette among Persians is one of the chief affairs of life, and their great study, particularly when dealing with strangers, is to gain, if they can, a point of this game in their own favour. That this was the case with all the embassies from England, may be seen in any account given of these missions, and it seems absolutely expedient to maintain the national dignity, not only by the means that are esteemed in Europe, but by those which carry weight in Asia. The influence of Britain in India has often been called that of opinion, though there we are armed with real power ; how much more important must it be to keep up that species of influence in Persia, if indeed it is expedient to continue our relations with that country at all, where we can have little or no real power. Had I been able to pass under the disguise of a Persian, or had I succeeded in penetrating to remoter countries, where the fear of the British name is less felt, my conduct would have been very different ; but in Persia, as a British subject, it appeared imperative on me to claim all the privileges of one, and to repel every thing like affront as a slight on the nation. Like a poor gentleman, in short, I was obliged to be much more punctilious than a richer man could afford to be : such a trifle as this was to be a sort of index, if I may say so, to my whole character, and if relinquished

without a struggle, would have left me in worse plight than I really needed to be.

Meerza Reza called upon me this forenoon, and expressed much surprise at my having gone to see the minister before he had fully explained to him my character and situation : it was, he assured me, to the minister's ignorance on this important point, that I owed the cool reception I had met with the evening before ; and in a like manner, it was to the information which he (the meerza) had given to the minister on these points, afterwards, that the more cordial and respectful reception of the morning was due. There is something uncandid and mysterious about these people, which makes it painful to have any dealings with them ; their actions are inconsistent with their profession ; their explanations dubious and unsatisfactory. This remark applies equally to the conduct of the princes and their ministers, as to that of Meerza Reza, in all their transactions with me : the motives for which, as well as the true causes of my detention in Gheelan, still remain to me a perfect mystery.

In reply to a written note of the articles which I sent to the minister according to his desire, he sent me a message to say, that a person had been dispatched to bring Mahomed Khan himself, or the things I had lost, and to desire my attendance at his levee next morning, when I should hear further.

June 26th. I waited on the minister, according to order, but was not again honoured with a private audience. I had to wait with others below for the appearance of the great man. He had no news to communicate ; but told me he had sent for my things from Mahomed Khan, and had informed the prince of my story : he assured me that his royal highness was much displeased at what had occurred, and that when my things arrived from Talish, I should be dismissed with marks of high favour. I ventured to express a hope that the persons who had so wantonly insulted and injured me, should meet with such reprehension as might be deemed proper, and that as every thing which occurred to me should be represented to his Persian majesty, through the English ambassador, I might have to express my satisfaction at the reparation offered to the injured subject of a

friendly state. "Leave all that to me," said he, "the business is in my hands, and every thing that is proper shall be done." With this emphatic reply, he moved on the door, and we all made our bows, and separated.

June 28th. I learned this day, that the minister had made arrangements for my reception by the prince, who had given orders that I should receive a *khelut*, and as he was informed I had spent the greater part of my money in maintaining myself during my detention, he directed a sum of thirty tomanes to be given to me, to serve for my travelling expences to Tabreez. The minister further desired that Meerza Reza and myself should attend his levee the next morning, after which he should carry me to be presented to the prince, and procure my leave.

June 29th. Early in the morning, I went with Meerza Reza to the minister's house; but he was much occupied, and did not make his appearance till a late hour; when he did, he was wonderfully gracious, gave me a seat by his side, told me the prince was desirous to see me this very day, and that he had made such arrangements about my seat as I should be fully satisfied with. He said that as it was difficult to procure carriage from Resht to Tabreez direct, he would recommend my going by the Enzellee road, and had directed Baba Allee Khan (my old Enzellee friend), to send a person who should see me safe to Khal-Khal: he apologised for having deferred my business so long from the press of other matters on his hands; and concluded by hoping I would now forget all the vexation and trouble I had experienced in Gheelan, in consideration of the distracted state of the place, and its master's absence; and not give that master a bad name for what he was innocent of. I replied, by professing my sense of the great obligations I owed to him for the friendly regard and ready assistance he had afforded me, which I assured him I should faithfully report to his friend the English *elchee*; and I had now no doubt of every thing going on well, as it was in the hands of so good and so just a nobleman.

About noon the meerza and myself were roused by the arrival of an attendant, who came to tell us the prince desired our immediate

attendance ; we were accordingly introduced by a private door to the interior of the palace ; and after more than the ordinary number of bows, were ushered into an apartment, at the upper end of which the prince himself was seated.

It was not without considerable curiosity that I examined the external appearance of a person who had exercised so great influence over my actions for some time past. His figure was comely, though slightly inclined to be fat, and his aspect grave, but far from unpleasing, with a good deal of the fine features of the royal family ; he possessed a sweetness of expression, which, had it not been poisoned by an affectation of dignity, which all these princes deem it indispensable to assume, would have been rather prepossessing. He was seated upon a shawl cushion, and leaned his back upon a large silk pillow ; his dress was plain, consisting only of an oemah or riding-coat of shawl, with a plain dagger stuck in his sash. He held in his hand a dervish's stick of ivory, perhaps indicative of his disposition towards the principles of that sect, which is said to be particularly strong.

There was here a greater affectation of state than I had observed at the court of any of his brothers ; it did not consist in an assemblage of ragged toffunchees, or crowds of servants, but in the ceremony observed in approaching him ; the only person present was the vizier, who was dressed in his robes of ceremony, which consisted of a splendid pelisse of green and gold silk, worked with rich embroidery and gold spangles, with rich fur upon the shoulders, and a high turban of shawls wound round his cap. He stood up at the lower end of the room opposite to the prince, waiting his commands. When we were introduced, he suffered us to stand for a time at the bottom of the apartment, but at last ordered me to be seated.

The conversation was much in the usual style ; the questions of where I had been, whither going, where I lived, and what I had seen, led to the ten times told tale of my detention and suffering. He observed, it was strange I should have desired to leave the country without seeing him. I answered, that my having thought

of doing so, and abandoning the hopes of seeing such a prince, sufficiently proved the urgent necessity under which I was, of hastening to Tabreez ; and I took the opportunity to mention how severe a loss I might be subjected to, by the detention I had suffered. To this he replied, that the country had been in a distracted state in consequence of his own absence, and that I must forget what had happened, as it resulted entirely from this unsettled state of things. He made a good many enquiries respecting the state of Khorasān, of Reza Koolee Khan, and Nujjuff Allee Khan ; my answers to which, as they coincided with his own opinions, appeared to please him. At length, after assuring me that he had given directions for expediting me on my way, and satisfying me in all respects, he gave us leave, and I left the presence.

I took an opportunity, on leaving the prince, to go and pay the compliments of leave-taking to the prince's uncle, who had always treated me with politeness ; and who now congratulated me heartily on my honourable release, and wished me a safe and speedy journey.

I found, on my return from the palace, that I had another patient on my hand ; Meerza Reza, who had been complaining all the morning, was attacked in the afternoon with a smart fit of fever, for which I had to prescribe. The wounded man was easier this day, and no worse in other respects.

June 30th. This morning I determined to send off my people and baggage, at least, and got every thing packed ; and after waiting a long time for one of Baba Allee Khan's people, at last had the pleasure to see them once more file out of the court-yard of Hadjee Meer Ismael, under better auspices than the last. I retained Seyed Allee, with two horses, to follow when I should have procured my final dismissal, along with the necessary papers. These I had reason to expect in the course of this day, but the greater part of it passed without their appearance. As I lounged in the shop of my friend Hadjee Moolla Baba towards evening, I was hailed by Mahomed Reza Khan of Kiskar, who had been charged to recover my goods from the khan of Massaul, and with whom I had become acquainted at the minister's levee, who told me that my things had arrived from

Mahomed Khan. Accordingly I was very soon saluted by one of my Talish guards, a little spare active fellow, a sort of page, or "Cal-lum beg" to the wild Highland chief of Massāul, who, from a dirty old handkerchief produced my silver case of instruments, and other trinkets, all sorely broken ; the remains of my medicines, in a sad state from rain ; Seyed Allee's and my daggers ; and eight tomauns in money of all descriptions. These I was requested to acknowledge the receipt of to the vizier, which I promised to do in the evening. I was not a little amused with the sly looks of the little henchman, who eyed me with a smothered smile, as if remembering the awkward situation in which he had formerly seen me, though now clear of his clutches.

The minister this evening received me with high favour, seating me by himself in presence of all the grandees of Resht, and handing me a plate of delicious ripe apricots, served in snow, which had just been brought in for himself, as if to compensate me for the slights which many of them had offered me. My host Hadjee Meer Ismael was present, as well as Hadjee Reza, who had refused me entrance into his house when I first came to Resht. He assured me that my other things, my pistol (which had been traced to the possession of Furz-Allee Beg, the gholaum who retook me), the two remaining tomauns, with the prince's present and my passports, should all be sent early next morning ; and in my own presence, he gave orders to a meerza for writing a letter to Mr. Willock, besides the usual order for soorsaut and protection, which forms the passport. He then dismissed me, desiring me to come to him when ready to depart.

July 1st. After waiting several hours in a state of readiness for departure, a messenger came with the stray pistol, but neither passport or present made their appearance ; so that I was forced, after a further delay, to repair to the durkhaneh myself, where I fortunately found the minister transacting business, until the prince should come into public. Soliciting his orders for expediting my departure, he called for the letters, signed them, gave them to me, and ordered the prince's gift to be brought : then, saying he was

obliged to attend the prince, took leave in a very kind tone, and left me among the attendants, who appeared little disposed to second his good intentions. Much time was unnecessarily wasted, many pipes smoked, and many useless forms gone through, before a receipt was handed me for thirty tomauns, which I was desired to seal.

I now discovered that the khelut, or dress of honour, was to be transformed into the thirty tomauns, instead of accompanying them ; but disgusted as I had been with so much delay, I had no desire whatever to agitate a question, which would not have been graciously received, and would have subjected me to still further detention. It was not certainly for the value of the khelut, but I disliked the apparent commutation for money ; because, although the latter was but too necessary to enable me to reach Tabreez, I did not by any means intend that it should appear to be received as an indemnification for what had passed, but only as a mark of the prince's bounty, given for the purpose of paying my travelling charges to Tabreez, as had at first been intended. At last the thirty tomauns in gold were handed to me ; I received this acknowledgment of my triumph in the very same room where I had been insulted and arrested. Not one moment did I delay my " Khodah Hafiz," and I almost leaped with impatience and joy, as I traversed the court, and re-crossed the ominous threshold of the palace gates, I devoutly hoped never to enter them more.

After directing the horses to be saddled, I went to the house of Hadjee Moolla Baba, to take leave of that kind and steady friend, and of Meerza Reza. I found the latter, who had enjoyed an intermission of some hours, labouring under a second violent attack of fever, and so uneasy, that in spite of my impatience, and the favourable breeze that blew directly for Enzellee, I was persuaded, at his instance, to remain with and nurse him through the fit of this night ; for there was no doubt that the fever was the common intermittent so prevalent in all marshy countries.

I advised him, as soon as the first strong and disabling succession of fits should be over, to lose no time in leaving Gheelan, and

returning for change of air to Tabreez, as the only means of escaping a tedious and perhaps fatal disorder. This he promised to do, but my disinterested urgency on this occasion proved the means of furnishing me with a trait of the meerza's character, which was rather disappointing. He entered bitterly into invective against the prince's unhandsome and niggardly conduct to himself, in withholding from him the smallest supply of money, although, as he assured me, upwards of 800 tomauns of cash were already due to him as wages ; and that, independent of the forced presents and peculations to which he had been subjected by the prince and his retainers, he had been obliged, not only to sell his clothes, shawls, and ornaments, but to get deeply in debt to his friends, and among the rest to the hadjee, for the means of subsistence. He said he was now almost penniless ; that he was unwilling to trespass further on the hadjee's generosity, and that as he was aware that I had just received thirty tomauns from the prince, which was more than sufficient (as he presumed) to carry me to Tabreez, he hoped I would do him the favour to lend him *ten* of these, and thus enable him also to move from this vile country ; that he would give me an order on his brother at Tabreez for the same amount, which should be paid immediately on presentation.

I was somewhat staggered with this request, not on account of the money, though with my company and number of animals to provide for, allowing contingencies on the road, I could very ill spare it, but because it had a bad appearance. I had before occasionally remarked some traits indicating a certain degree of his country's meanness and selfishness in the meerza, but had dismissed these suspicions from me as unworthy, and was unwilling to believe there was any alloy of interestedness in the really great friendship he had shown me. This, however, was a measure of most suspicious appearance ; he knew my circumstances well ; he knew the heavy losses my detention had subjected me to, and the real necessity which had induced me to accept of the prince's present ; so that I was the last person to whom he ought to have made such an application. But the poor man was very ill ; perhaps the tale of his

poverty was true, and that he should not be able to remove from a noxious climate without such assistance, might be equally so : there was no doubt that he had been of considerable service to me, the sacrifice therefore now required might be considered as the discharge of a debt ; but, I confess, I should have been better pleased, had it been claimed in a more handsome manner. I gave him the money, and received from him what he told me was an order on his brother at Tabreez, and which turned out not worth a farthing ; it never was paid ; it did not even prove to be an order, but a mere acknowledgment of receipt, for the payment of which, the brother said, he could not consider himself liable in any degree.

The truth is, that the meerza in character was a Persian ; like too many of his countrymen, he was thoughtless, extravagant, and very lax in both moral and religious principles, and from these defects was often led to be guilty of acts, which otherwise he might have scorned ; for I believe, that he was naturally kind, and had many good dispositions. His English education, and intercourse with Englishmen, had no doubt a beneficial effect upon his character, but could not eradicate the evil implanted by early and continued habit.

Hadjee Moolla Baba was a very different person ; I have seldom known a more engaging compound of simplicity and kind-heartedness than this old man exhibited, and I believe also of perfect sincerity, united with an excellent understanding. Through the medium of Meerza Reza, I became early acquainted with this excellent person ; and throughout the whole of my trying residence in Resht, I experienced from him the most uniform kindness, and often a great degree of very active friendship, quite uninfluenced by the varying circumstances of the time. I was indebted to the hadjee for many a pleasant meal ; and many a comfortable evening which would otherwise have passed heavily enough. I was admitted to his privacy, shared his good-humoured mirth, and was comforted by his cheerful forebodings of better days. I can look back upon the whole of my intercourse with the hadjee, with the comfortable reflection, that no circumstance occurred during its continuance, calculated to lower

the high regard, and I may say affection, I was led to entertain for him.

If I met with much mortification and insult in Resht, I have the pleasure of declaring, that I met also with much disinterested kindness ; and among those to whom I have been chiefly indebted it is but justice to record the names of Hadjee Moolla Baba, Meerza Mahomed Allee, and, in spite of some unfortunate exceptions in conduct, of Meerza Mahomed Reza.

CHAP. XIX.

THE AUTHOR QUITS RESHIT, AND ARRIVES AT ENZELLE. — DISAPPOINTED OF MULES AT THAT PLACE. — IS FORCED TO SEND HIS BAGGAGE BY BOAT. — REACHES SHUFFEEROOD. — ALLEE KOOLBE KHAN AND HIS VILLAGE. — CALASERAI. — DIFFICULTY OF PROCURING BAGGAGE CATTLE. — ASCEND THE MOUNTAINS. — BALLA KHAN'S RESIDENCE. — REACH ARDEBEEL. — RECEPTION FROM MAHOMED KHAN KADJER THE GOVERNOR.

AT sun-rise in the morning of the 2d July 1822, I took my final leave of Hadjee Meer Ismael's house, and its few waking inhabitants, and of the good city of Resht. On our arrival at Peeree Bazar, although we had an order charging the custom-house officer to provide a boat for us without delay, it was two hours before we were accommodated; and our passage was at last effected by pressing a boat from Mazunderan, loaded with sugar, and sore against the owner's inclination. I pitied the man, who was forced to land his cargo, and retrace his course to Enzellee, but it was in vain to object, for in that case I should have been left completely in the lurch; the officers would have their own way, and these things are hourly practised in Gheelân.

It was a passage of some anxiety; for doubts were reasonably entertained, whether my horses, which had never seen a boat, except in crossing the Suffeerood, would remain quiet during fifteen miles' run, sailing with a contrary wind; to add to our difficulties, they began fighting on the bank, and my only servant, Seyed Allee, received a severe bite in the arm while separating them. This totally disabled him, and he lay down in the boat writhing with pain; I was obliged, therefore, to take his place, and endeavour to quell a feud of long-standing between the horses, during this tedious transit. 'We

struggled against the wind for three hours, and at last were forced to come to a headland very little advanced on our way, and to reland the horses until the wind should shift or fall. This did not occur till late in the evening, when having once more got under weigh, we reached Enzellee, fortunately without further accident, about eleven o'clock at night. I learned here that the people of Baba Allee Khan as well as my own, had been making enquiry unsuccessfully for mules to carry our baggage to Khal-Khal, and I retired to my wretched lodgings in no high spirits.

July 3d. Early in the morning, my old friend the darogha of the bazar, with another of Baba Allee Khan's servants, waited on me to say, there had been no arrivals from Khal-Khal of late, and as the season during which they bring butter from that place was past, they knew not when such a thing might occur; that there were no mules in Enzellee itself, nor in any villages within many fursungs; and, consequently, they had not the means of forwarding my baggage in this way. They therefore proposed to send it by a boat, to the mouth of a stream called the Shuffeerood, about five fursungs to the westward, where they could procure cattle to transport it to the village of a certain chief, Allee Koollee Khan by name, who in his turn would forward us at once to Khal-Khal.

I strongly objected at first to this plan, well knowing the uncertainty of procuring baggage-cattle in these jungles; but there was no alternative, except to wait an indefinite time for the arrival of mules from Khal-Khal, or to return once more to Resht, where we had already experienced the impossibility of hiring any. I thought it best, therefore, upon the whole, to avail myself of Baba Allee Khan's influence, for this day's journey at least, hoping that it might be exchanged on the next day for that of Allee Koollee Khan; and so in succession, through virtue of the prince's orders, until we should have quitted these detestable thickets, and gained the upper and more open country.

Our baggage and part of the servants were accordingly embarked in a boat at nine o'clock in the forenoon, while I accompanied the others with the horses by land along the beach. Our path

resembled that which we had so long followed on the banks of the Caspian ; it led for a part of the way entirely through groves of wild plums, the fruit of which, in various stages of ripeness, and in great clusters of blue, black, purple, red, or bright yellow, tempted us to refresh ourselves, and quench the thirst occasioned by a burning sun ; but the feast was like that of Tantalus, as few were fit to be eaten.

We reached the mouth of the river Shuffeerood a little before three o'clock, where the boat, having been favoured by the wind, had arrived before, and landed the baggage. The place seemed quite deserted, and there was no sign to be seen either of man or beast. Only one person had accompanied us from Enzellee, and he set off immediately, as he said, to bring us horses ; but three hours having passed without any appearance of him or them, we began with no small anxiety to provide for bivouacking where we were till next morning, rather than risk going astray in searching for a village, and leaving our baggage on the beach. At last he appeared, leading three yaboos, which he had seized for our accommodation.

The receiver is as bad as the thief, it will be said, and I am almost ashamed to say we took possession of these ponies with little or no compunction. The anecdote, trivial as it is, may have its value, by showing the effect of bad government in deadening a sense of justice in the minds both of those who abuse their power, and of those who are exposed to its operation. The practical effect is to render every man a tyrant as far as his means extend, and thus the whole society becomes a varied scale of cruelty and violence, from the shah on his musnud to the horse-keeper in his stable. At first we were shocked beyond measure at such deeds ; but in proportion as we found law and right utterly despised, we were compelled to yield to the vicious current which swept over this unhappy country ; and in process of time I dare say we should have become very good Persians ; for I must own that we now saw our man return with his prize with great satisfaction.

We lost no time in loading, and soon reached the neighbouring village, where our motions were quickened, by learning that Allee

Koolee Khan was just setting off for his yeilak, and that if we did not immediately proceed to his house, several miles distant, we should lose his assistance. This was no pleasant news either to us or to our guides, who would fain have taken up their quarters where they were, but the ketkhodah insisted on their going on; and although night had now come on, we set forward upon one of those Gheelance by-paths, through jungle and among rice-fields, with which I had become so well acquainted in my attempted escape, and which proved so intricate, that our guides more than once went astray, and treated us with the prospect of passing the night in a swampy forest.

At length, about eleven o'clock, our eyes were cheered by the sight of lights that streamed from the village of Allee Koolee Khan. We soon alighted at his door, where we found him seated in a balcony, dressed in the Talish costume, and ready to start for his mountain abode; but we soon discovered that neither his will nor his ability were likely to afford us much assistance in prosecuting our journey. He promised to furnish us with pack-horses, indeed, but only to a neighbouring village, where fresh ones were to be procured that should carry us on to Calaserai, a village, he told us, on the direct road to Hero and Khal-Khal, the ketkhodah of which, Reza Koolee, he was confident, would furnish us with horses to carry us into Azerbaijan, by the pass of Dehinch Noh. As to the pass by which he himself meant to ascend, he strongly dissuaded us from attempting it, as he affirmed it was impracticable for our cattle, on account of its great steepness and asperity.

It was pretty evident now, that Baba Allee Khan had been desirous only to rid himself of us, and the trouble and expence which forwarding us to Khal-Khal, according to the prince's orders, would have entailed on him; and that Allee Koolee Khan was playing the same game; but as I had been informed that Calaserai was really a principal stage upon the road to Khal-Khal, I thought if we once reached it we should at least be able to hire mules to carry us up the passes, after which the road would be clear: imperfect, therefore, as the khan's promised assistance was, I gladly accepted of it, and after

an excellent supper of broiled salmon, was right happy to get to rest. The khan himself appeared, in many respects, as much of a savage as Mahomed Khan Massaul, though without quite so much ferocity. Possibly, however, if I had been in his power, this distinction might have disappeared. The whole village, as well as the house and establishment, partook of the character of their master, and were among the wildest retreats I ever saw.

July 4th. I knew the khan was desirous to set off, and therefore was early on foot. When the cattle were ordered, I saw, with some dismay, the same three sorry ponies that had carried us hither the preceding night, brought out to be loaded for this morning's march. Remonstrance, however, was useless; the khan assured us they would carry us capitally to the next village, where they were to be changed; and so having obtained a guide, we took leave and set off.

It was ten o'clock when we reached the village, having traversed a thick swampy jungle, and crossed several streams, our general directions being west. At this place the ketkhodah gave us an excellent breakfast, but swore he had no horses, and in spite of the tears and prayers of the poor guides, whose ponies had now carried us from Shuffeerood, he forced them to go on to Calaserai, only adding to the number one small sorry beast, to lighten the loads of the others. We now returned to the shore of the Caspian, from whence we had diverged, and proceeding along its margin, reached the village of Calaserai, the distance of which from Enzellee may be from thirty to thirty-five miles, in a direction about N.W. by W. The character of the shore and country is the same as described to the eastward of Resht. The village of Calaserai is about half a mile from the sea-coast, and more than two from the foot of the Talish hills, which rise to a great height above it. It is the first village in that part of Talish which is annexed to the province of Azerbijan, and is under the government of Abbas Meerza.

The ketkhodah, Reza Koolee, received us coldly enough: we were, no doubt, unwelcome guests. He gave us a decent lodging and provisions, but when we explained to him that we required pack-

horses to carry us to Hero, he swore by his own life and ours, that there was not one in all the village; that only a week before, we might have had an hundred, but that now the inhabitants having left the village for their yeilaks, had taken all the cattle along with them. I told him I had letters for the caimucan, or minister, at Tabreez, to delay which, would be very inexpedient, and that it would tell little in his favour, if I should report, on my arrival, that I had suffered detention at the first village in Abbas Meerza's country. He swore by the heads of the prophet, of the king, and of all the princes, that he told truth, that he had not the command of a single pony. He persisted so firmly in his tale, that I began to consider the possibility of loading our baggage upon the riding horses, and thus ascending the passes.

While thus occupied, the ketkhodah came forward and told us, that if we were determined to go by the Noh Pass, he could not, indeed, assist us, but that he thought we had been ill advised in attempting that road, which, he assured us, was by far the worst of those leading to Khal-Khal; that muleteers do indeed come and go by it occasionally, but are frequently obliged to unload their beasts, and carry the goods themselves across particular bad places, and that he was sure our horses would never get through. If, however, we should take his advice, and proceed to Kergon Rood, a village only sixteen miles further along the shore, and from thence ascend the Aghabler Pass to the yeilak of Balla Khan, we should find a capital road and plenty of cattle. In this case he might contrive to supply us with two horses, lame, and fired in the back indeed, and unfit to ascend the hills, but able to carry our luggage on to Kergon Rood, along the sea-coast. He moreover stated, that from Kergon Rood to Aghabler, the yeilak of Balla Khan, was a distance of only eight miles, and from thence to Hero about as far: while from Calascerai to the yeilak Noh was thirty to thirty-five miles, and from thence to Hero a good day's journey.

I was so much accustomed to the duplicity of these people, that I suspected some deception was concealed under these fair terms, although I could not conceive where it lay. But my people had been

making inquiries of the villagers regarding the road, and their information corresponding with that of the ketkodah, I did not see how I could be worse off by following the advice he had given, and accepted his offer for the next morning, and made our arrangements accordingly.

July 5th. It was eight o'clock before the ponies were produced and loaded ; but at length we set off, attended by two men as guides, and proceeding along the sea-beach reached Kergon Rood village, sixteen miles from Calaserai, at about one o'clock.

We found it deserted like the rest — all its inhabitants had gone to the mountains, and its chief, a poor miserable person, protested, in the common strain, that he could not furnish a single pony. He moreover informed us, that we had been miserably misled by the head man of Calaserai, who, to get rid of us, had sent us just a day's journey out of our way ; that the khan's mountain-station was twenty-four miles of heavy road from this village, and from thence to Hero was a long day's march. Whereas the road to No Deh, he affirmed, was by far the best, and the yeilak or summer-station itself, close to Hero ; he bitterly reviled the said chief, as a misleader of travellers, and one who, to serve his own ends, had not only sent us on a fool's errand, but palmed us upon him.

I have given the occurrences of these few day's journey, somewhat more fully than they may be thought to merit, because they furnish a fair specimen of the character and disposition of the people, and the treatment which a traveller may expect in Gheelan. At all these places I would willingly have hired cattle, and always rewarded such as were pressed for my service. There was no want of cattle, for we always saw many grazing about, yet the inhabitants would neither lend nor hire them to us ; and several worthy persons, as has been seen, without remorse, sent me several marches out of the way, rather than yield any assistance, with or without reward.

I resolved to try another plan in the present instance. I left him, and set Seyed Allee to work upon him, who, after threatening him on the one hand with the anger of the caimucan, and on the other promising to pay handsomely for every thing we consumed,

as well as for the horses required, prevailed upon him to promise three ponies, at a hire of two reals a picce, to carry our baggage one stage forward to Aghabler, the summer residence of Balla Khan.

The village, which is but a number of houses in detached clusters, is situated on the banks of the Kergon Rood, a large stream, running through a more open and pleasant country than most parts of Gheelan which I had seen. The wood is confined to clumps about the houses, and the greater part of the land is under meadow, divided by hedges and trees, and interspersed with large corn-fields. The hills approach here within a mile of the sea, which is bordered, as usual, with a belt of thick forest; the mountains rise above all, in forms of great magnificence, but passing clouds so frequently obscured them, that I had no opportunity, as I much wished, of sketching any part of this interesting landscape.

July 6th. Our host kept his word, producing his pack-horses by six o'clock, at which time we reloaded and set forward, crossing the valley to the point where the river debouches from the hills. Here we entered its bed, which lay in a noble alder forest, and occasionally crossed and recrossed the stream on solid wooden bridges. We continued thus ascending and descending, according to the nature of the banks, between richly wooded hills, upon a capital road, for nearly five hours, in the course of which time we made several halts to refix our loads, and let our horses take breath. At this time, about eleven o'clock, we commenced a sharp ascent, upon a broad and excellent road, which soon took us high upon the brow of a projecting hill, and wound along its side with occasional ascents and descents, until the bed of the river, the fall of which here was rapid, rose gradually to the level we had attained. We then crossed, and climbing its right bank, wound among projecting shelves of the hills, covered with patches of corn-land for a considerable distance, until we reached a noble basin in the mountains, covered with rich cultivation, and embellished by several fine villages. This was the yeilak of Balla Khan.

Nothing could be more striking than the difference of the pass which we this day ascended, and that of Massāul, which I had be-

come acquainted with in my unfortunate attempt to escape. The latter was dangerous and difficult to the last degree; this, on the contrary, was safe and gradual, and the road uniformly good. All the difficult points had been helped by art, and all the dangerous passes built up or hewn out, so that every part was most easily practicable for laden cattle. In several places it was supported by beams of wood and mason-work along the faces of precipices. A narrow causeway was also built in some wet or marshy places, which render them readily passable in bad weather. From these numerous traces of labour and skill, I am led to infer that this pass must have been the commencement of Shah Abbas's great causeway, already so often alluded to as opening the communication between the countries of Gheclan and Azerbijan, and rendering the former accessible to that monarch's troops at all times and seasons.

This yeilak of Balla Khan lies in a recess of the mountains, forming a circular valley, which slopes gradually in fine undulations to their feet, on all sides except the north-east, and thus affords a large quantity of land sufficiently level for agricultural purposes. All of this open space was richly cultivated with wheat in every stage of maturity, from green to fully ripe, interspersed also with fallow and ploughed land, and divided into fields by rows of bushes, trees, and coppice, so as to afford the most harmonious variety of tint. A number of small streams ran on all sides from the mountains, and diversified it still further with long strips of wood. On the north-east, the river Kergon Rood found its way along the foot of very precipitous but well-wooded hills. The mountains in other quarters had their lower regions clothed with forests, or opened into glades of meadow and cultivated land; while their tops, sometimes rising into bare peaks of rocks, sometimes swelling into grassy knolls, and covered with flocks, were often half obscured in clouds.

Such was the scene that, like a glimpse of fairy-land, broke upon us when we reached the top of the pass. There were several clusters of houses scattered about the plain and in the tributary valleys, but they all are known by the name of Aghabler. This is properly the lower yeilak or summer residence of the khan: the

grazings of his people and the remoter yeilaks are high in the mountains that surround the valley.

We traversed much of this pleasing scene on our way to the khan's dwelling, which was situated among a cluster of houses near the river, sheltered from the wind by a grove of old walnut trees, which also grew luxuriantly in all the villages around. I had dispatched a messenger in advance to give notice of our approach, so that I was conducted at once to a comfortable lodging, to which the khan himself welcomed me in the kindest and most hospitable manner; indeed, he went so unnecessarily far as to insist upon my occupying the chief seat, while he himself took one far below. He inquired what he could do for me, desired I would command him and all he had; and concluded by hoping I would remain with him a month, a week, or, if not, at least a couple of days. He said he was well acquainted with M. Willock and other English gentlemen at 'Tabreez, and also talked much of a visit he had received some years before from an officer whom he designated by the appellation of *Colonel Khan*. This was possibly Colonel D'Arcy, who, I believe, visited these mountains. After a time he left me, and I took advantage of the opportunity to make several sketches of this interesting valley.*

* Mr. Gmelin, the Russian *savant*, visited the Talish mountains in 1772; and we have an account of his observations in the "*Histoires des Decouvertes en Russie, &c. &c.*" by Berouilli. It is with great hesitation and deference that I venture to question the authority of such a traveller as Gmelin, particularly as we have not the means of referring to his own words; but there are some statements made in the above-mentioned work, which I cannot help pointing out as not consistent with my own experience on the same ground. It is said that respiration becomes difficult as the tops of these mountains are approached by travellers. I should be apt to think, with Mr. Gmelin's translator, that the Russian naturalist had out-breathed himself by over-exertion, rather than had his respiration affected by the rarity of the atmosphere, which certainly is not, in general, so much attenuated at a height of six or seven hundred feet. It is also mentioned that the mountain tops are always covered with snow, and that neither man, beast, nor bird can live among them in winter from the severity of the cold. To the first part of this assertion I must distinctly object; for though a few spots of snow may be seen throughout the summer and autumn in particular places, no point in the range, except Demawund, bears snow continually; twice I passed over a very lofty part of them, but found no snow; and during the *whole year round* caravans constantly cross and recross by the passes which lead over their summits. Mr. Gmelin also remarks, that the ermine and martin are very common among these hills, and that the former is so tame as to allow itself to be taken

The difference in manner and appearance, as well as in conduct, between this Talish chief and the other mountain savages of the same district, or indeed the khans of Gheelān with whom I had made acquaintance, in general, was as remarkable as it was agreeable. Balla Khan was a perfectly well-bred Persian gentleman, obliging and kind; the respect he showed me, and the humility he affected himself, were no doubt both rather excessive; but the more I saw of him, the more I was surprised that such a person should be found in such a place. My curiosity was naturally awakened to know how this came to pass.

The family of Balla Khan was neither ancient nor powerful. When Mustapha Khan, the chief of all the Talish clans, after having struggled long against the increasing power of the reigning family, took refuge in the Russian territories, the present king, with a view to induce the subordinate chiefs to withdraw their support from their superior, created them independent khans, bestowing upon them villages and districts, in place of those they held from Mustapha Khan. The father of Balla Khan was the principal of those who received their portion in that part of Talish which is attached to Azerbijan, and his sons, Balla and Meer Goonah, inherited his lands and dignity. But Balla Khan, having on some occasion excited the displeasure of Abbas Meerza, was taken prisoner by that prince's order*, and carried to Tabreez, where he was detained two or three years, and only returned home, on promise of strict allegiance, a few months before this time. This gave him opportunity

by the hand. That these animals may exist among the mountains of Gheelan, may be very true, but I should doubt their being in any abundance, because it is well known, that Persia is entirely supplied with furs, of which much use is made, from abroad, which would hardly be the case if the fur-bearing animals were abundant among their own mountains.

In many respects, however, Mr. Gmelin's account of Gheelan will be found valuable, particularly in the department of natural history, to which he principally directed his attention.

* I think some "ruse de guerre," not very creditable to the prince's good faith, was made use of to get him into his power.

of improving by the manners of the court, which he had certainly profited by.

This well-bred khan sent a good dinner to my quarters, and courteously came himself to partake of it, after which he sat conversing very agreeably till a late hour. I told him of all the difficulties I had experienced in getting baggage-cattle, but added, I was quite sure this inconvenience would no longer be felt, now I had reached the habitation of so powerful and friendly a chief, and trusted confidently to his influence to procure me the requisite number of cattle to convey me to Herō. He politely answered, that, although he had hoped I would remain his guest for some time, as my business would not admit of delay, he would himself see that mules and guides were ready for me whenever I required them; but he advised me by all means to go by Ardebeel rather than by Hero, as the former was a far preferable road to Tabreez, both in point of quality and distance. Thus informed by a person who could not, as I believed, have any interest or inducement to deceive me, I decided on going by Ardebeel; and as I had so frequently experienced the difficulty of making arrangements for baggage-cattle, I determined to precede my party, and engage conveyance beforehand to Tabreez, so that there might be no vexatious delay at Ardebeel. It was therefore settled that the mules and guides should attend early next morning, and the khan left me to prepare for our journey.

July 7. I rose at the first peep of day, but found, as in most countries, that depending upon others is a bad way to get on; for at six o'clock, my obliging friend the khan had not risen, and not a mule or horse had arrived. When the khan left his private apartments, he had a letter to write, which he wished me to carry to the Futeh Allee Khan, the beglerbeg at Tabreez, and this detained me till near seven, when, knowing the long journey I had before me, I was induced to set off even before I saw the baggage accommodated with cattle; but as the khan assured me they should not be long delayed, I trusted to his word, from the ready kindness he had shown me, and had no uneasiness in quitting them.

Our road lay across the valley for some miles, and then slanted upwards along the side of a small subsidiary glen. The ascent at times was steep, but the road was good ; and we halted several times, both to rest ourselves, for we walked all the way up the hill, as well as to let the horses feed, as they had got but little grass the night before, so that we did not find it fatiguing. From the top of the ascent, which might be six miles from the khan's house, we wound along the margin of a deep and precipitous ravine for about an equal distance, until we came to its source, in a small, green, swampy meadow, where there were several tents of wandering tribes. On this part of the road we encountered several narrow and dangerous spots, rendered peculiarly alarming by the dark chasms below. At this point the descent commenced, and we saw before us a long valley, which expanded into an extensive plain, with various streams meeting in a small lake three or four miles further on, lying in a naked country. This road, which was very rocky, as well as the diminished verdure, showed we had exchanged the rich pasture of the Talish mountains for the arid regions of Upper Persia. As we advanced, the plains became covered with tents and flocks of wandering tribes, and our attention was arrested by the appearance of camels, long strangers to us, and whose soft feet one would think ill adapted for the stony paths of these mountains. There was no longer a tree to be seen ; nevertheless, the solitary lake, encircled by a rich green belt, thickly spotted with cattle, formed a pastoral scene of singular interest, and all the more pleasing from being in perfect contrast to the dense forests, the gloomy aspect of which had so long wearied our eyes and oppressed our spirits.

Passing the lake, we again mounted a range of rocky hills to a gorge, from whence we looked down upon the immense plain of Ardebeel stretching itself to the west and north-west, its nearer parts variegated with cultivation, while clouds hung low over its further extremities, giving to it the effect of indefinite extension. Nearly due west rose the magnificent mountain of Savalān, the snowy summit of which was hid in the clouds. To the south lay a wide extent

of hilly country, in all variety of form and height, dotted with cultivation, and bounded by still higher ranges.

We looked in vain for the city of Ardebeel; and when at last we detected a dusky line scarcely marking the vast plain at a great distance, we hoped we might be mistaken, for it seemed as if our utmost efforts would not enable us to reach it before dark. However, we lost no time in proceeding downwards, and at three o'clock reached the village Hassawur, which is called half-way between Aghabler and Ardebeel. From the time it had cost us to get so far, we could not reckon its distance at less than twenty-two miles. The ketkhodah, who had but just arrived from Ardebeel, stated that he had left it early in the morning, so we may fairly allow the same distance for this half also. After descending into the plain, it was a most fatiguing ride, as we pushed on our jaded horses, watching the declining sun, while the distant objects that marked the city seemed to continue as remote as ever. A violent wind also sprung up as the evening fell, very distressing to ourselves and our famished beasts, so that we quite despaired of reaching the city before the gates should be shut, and, what was of no small consequence, in time to make arrangements for lodging our party and procuring refreshments, in order that our progress next day might not be retarded.

After much exertion, we reached the gates of Ardebeel about half-past seven, having been on the road thirteen hours, of which we had rested one, and for a considerable number marched but slowly. If, therefore, we set down the distance from Aghabler to Ardebeel at forty miles, we shall not perhaps be far wrong, but the severity of the ascent and roughness of the road going down, added greatly to the fatigue.

On entering the town, we rode directly to the gate of the fort, the residence of Mahomed Khan Kadjer, the naib or governor. This person, it seems, had pretensions to high rank, derived from being connected with the royal family by marriage; and he thought fit, accordingly, to assume a mighty degree of state upon all occasions. I sent Seyed Allee in advance to mention my arrival, and to beg his influence, should it be necessary, in procuring baggage-cattle for my

people when they should arrive. My ambassador, however, met with a repulse at the gate of the fort. This augured no good, and I was about to retire, when a man came to call us back, observing that the rebuff my servant had met with, was occasioned by the necessity of adhering to some rule of etiquette relative to entering the fort ; he now offered to conduct us to the naib. I told him that a single message would accomplish all I required ; but while explaining myself to a man who very civilly offered to convey my wishes, another person came to say the naib wished to see me. I turned my horse about accordingly, and entering the fort, passed through several courts till I found myself in front of a large hall of audience, in a recess of which the khan was seated in state, with a double row of servants stretching from the window before him to a tank in the court, like a prince of the blood royal. I passed these lines of attendants intending to go up according to custom, to the room in which their master sat ; when a person advancing, desired me to go in front and bow to the khan, as is done to princes, after which, the khan would give me permission to enter. With some surprize I refused to submit to such a proceeding ; and the servants on the other hand began to remonstrate, saying, that it was the custom, that the khan was a very great man, &c. &c. I cut them short, by saying it was a mode of procedure which even princes had not insisted on, and to which I should certainly not submit with any khan whatever ; that I had no business with their master, and if he did not choose to give me a proper seat I should quit the place without seeing him. I was about to make my words good, when a respectable looking man came up to make more particular enquiries regarding me ; but at that moment, another message arrived from the khan, consenting to receive me and give me a seat.

I walked up, boots, sword, and all, just as I had alighted from my horse, and entering the room with a " salaam aleikoom," took a middling seat, upon which the khan, in as pompous a tone as any prince, began his interrogations. I answered some of these, and then observed, that if his servants had carried to him my first message, *he* would have been spared all this trouble, and *I* the annoy-

ance I had suffered from his people ; that I was an English traveller just arrived from a long journey, and had expected a more hospitable reception than I seemed likely to meet at Ardebeel. On this he growled an apology, saying that my message had not reached him, and that from my clothes, I had been taken for a *kuzzil-bāsh**, and treated as such. He then cross-questioned me on the subject of my travels, and on my acquaintance with the English at Tabreez, with an evident desire to catch me in some inconsistency. Wearied of this, I offered to produce my papers in proof of my veracity, but he said this would do for next day, for that I must remain his guest for some time. Afraid of further detention, I pleaded my business and earnest desire to reach Tabreez, upon which he told me that I should not find M. Willock there, that he had left Tabreez these two months past for England, where he had no doubt ere now arrived.

Although prepared for something of this sort, I was a good deal confounded at learning the confirmation of the rumours I had heard, and endeavoured to learn further particulars regarding the departure of my friends from Persia ; but the khan would or could not give me any ; he said the other gentlemen were still at Tabreez, and I urged the departure of the charge d'affaires as a further reason for pressing my journey to that place. To this he made little reply, but ordered his dinner, which was a hint for me to leave the place. He appointed me a lodging and entertainment, and promised to furnish my people with baggage-cattle when they should arrive. So I left the room, with an attendant sent to show me to my quarters, resolved, if possible, to avoid all future intercourse with this great man.

* A Persian soldier, literally a *red head* ; because, formerly, red caps, with turbans wound around them, were worn by the Persians instead of the present black lamb-skin cap, which was introduced by the Kadjers.

CHAP. XX.

TOMBS OF SHEIKH SUFFEE, AND SHAH ISMAEL DESCRIBED. — CLIMATE OF ARDEBEEL.
 — BAGGAGE ARRIVES. — AUTHOR LEAVES ARDEBEEL. — JOURNEY TO TABREEZ. —
 ARRIVAL THERE.

JULY 9th. We were lodged with the ketkhodah of the town, who did not appear to have a second public room, so that all persons were received in that which I occupied : this was neither agreeable nor safe, as I had not servants to look after my property. Upon due consideration I determined to wait the arrival of my baggage, which was looked for this night, and see it myself provided with the means of proceeding before I should start for Tabreez. This precaution might prevent a greater delay and much future mortification ; accordingly, we watched with anxiety for their arrival all day, but night set in without their appearing ; and we retired to rest in no small uneasiness on their account.

During this and the following day, I took every opportunity to examine the town of Ardebeel, though it does not contain many objects capable of arresting the traveller's attention. It is built near the southern side of the great Sahara, or plain of Ardebeel, which may extend for sixty miles in length, and forty in breadth ; of these there is but little cultivated, and a great part is totally uninhabited. The town which has been built out of the remains of a former city, does not, I should imagine, equal a third of Sheeraz in size. It contains only between five and six hundred families, and though I have no certain information on the subject, I was led from the appearance of the bazars and streets to believe this statement not far from the truth. It is surrounded by a ruinous wall of mud, topt with bricks, and flanked with towers in a like state of decay. The

houses are mean and small, built of mud, or sun-burnt bricks, with flat roofs like those of the poorest villages. There are no gardens round it, as is the case with most other towns, and although there is a good deal of cultivation near it, there are no villages, so that one wonders where the cultivators live. The fort is a regular square, with bastions at the corners, a ditch, a glacis and drawbridges at the gates, constructed according to the European system of fortification, by order of Abbas Meerza, at an expence, it is said, of 160,000*l.* sterling.

The only objects of real interest in Ardebeel, are the tombs of Sheikh Suffee, the ancestor of the Suffavean kings ; of Sultan Hyder, the warlike devotee, his third or fourth descendant ; and of Shah Ismael, the first of that dynasty who filled the Persian throne. These form a collection of domes and oblong squares, the plan of which I could not exactly understand, and many of which are in ruins. The whole has been once richly adorned with lacquered tiles, in the style of all Shah Abbas's works. An oblong apartment, the two domes of which, ornamented with devices in coloured tiles and gold, serves for the oratory or place of prayer ; and the tomb of Sheikh Suffee, guarded by two railings, one covered with silver, the other with gold, is placed at one end of this chamber. The mysterious obscurity of the place renders it difficult to see distinctly every thing that is around this tomb. The whole has been richly adorned with azure and gold, and a number of lamps, some of them of silver, depended from the ceiling. Every thing, however, wore a faded and ruinous air. The tomb of Shah Ismael occupied a small chamber on one side, and is covered with a box of dark wood, like ebony, inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl, said to have been brought from India.

A large octagonal apartment, covered by the principal dome, has obtained the name of the zerfkhanah or china-ware-room, because all the china dishes used in the feasts which Shah Ismael gave to his daily guests, were preserved here in niches formed for the purpose in the wall. This apartment has been very richly adorned, and the niches which occupy the wall on all sides, and in

various figures, produce an effect resembling that of magnificent fret-work. But the china-ware no longer fills them; in one of the earthquakes to which this district is liable, so many of them were thrown down and destroyed, that the whole were taken from their cells and placed upon the floor, where they now stand covered with dust. There are also in the chamber, as I understood, some valuable books, in like manner going to decay.

There are not, as far as I could ascertain, any fixed revenues or rich endowments annexed to this place for its support, as at Mushed and Koom; consequently it is chiefly kept up by the donations of pilgrims and pious sheahs; this perhaps may explain the reason why a Frank, like myself, was permitted to visit every part of the shrine, upon making a small present to the mootwullee, or superior, to show it. The prince on one occasion ordered a small sum of money to be furnished for repairing the place, and new binding the books; but the person who was entrusted with it ran away with the funds, and no further effort was made to save the place from the decay to which it is hastening. "The Kadjers," observed the mootwullee, "are more apt to take from than give to an establishment of any kind." The faithless agent did not escape; he got no further than Bāko, where he was smitten with illness, in consequence, it was firmly believed, of the sheikh's wrath, to which he very soon fell a victim.

The climate of Ardebeel is cold; indeed the whole plain is considered as a yeilak, or cool residence for summer; it is subject, also, to a violent wind from the north-east, which, blowing from the Caspian over high hills in that quarter, and becoming chilled by the snow which covers them at some seasons, has a deleterious effect on certain kinds of vegetation, particularly on fruit trees; none of these can be made productive near the town; and this is the reason why there are no gardens; all the fruit made use of in Ardebeel is brought from the neighbouring district of Khal-Khal. I had no thermometer with me, but during the two days I remained in Ardebeel, I should have guessed that in the shade it might have varied from 50 to 65°; the weather was cloudy and unpleasant, and the

high wind, already spoken of, began to blow each forenoon, and continued till late at night.

July 9th. After an anxious day, I was comforted in the evening by the appearance of my people and baggage, slowly winding along the plain and approaching Ardebeel. I learnt from them, that upon my leaving Aghabler, the kindness of Balla Khan towards my people had considerably diminished, and that the baggage-cattle, instead of being early ready, had not been produced till near evening, at an hour when it was quite too late to ascend the pass, so that they had been forced to remain another night. There was no grass or straw furnished for the horses, and so little corn, that my servant John was under the necessity of purchasing some to eke out the stinted supply. It was not, therefore, until the morning after I left them that they were enabled to proceed; and the beasts furnished by the khan after carrying them to the first village beyond the pass, put down the loads, and would proceed no further. A requisition was immediately made for mules to carry them to Ardebeel; and it was not without much difficulty and delay that they succeeded the next day in hiring mules at an exorbitant price, for this comparatively short distance.

Relieved by their arrival I made the necessary disposition for starting in the morning at an early hour, and Seyed Allee having discovered some muleteers of his acquaintance in the place, we found no difficulty in agreeing with them to transport our baggage to Tabreez, without any further reference to the khan.

July 10th. We were on foot by five o'clock just as the sun rose, but anxious to reach Tabreez sooner than could be done with the incumbrance of loaded beasts, and certain that all difficulty and danger were now at an end, I took Seyed Allee alone, and, mounted on my best horse, pushed forwards by long and rapid marches. Our route from the town lay through a valley, along a stream which flows past the eastern gate; it was bordered by fine meadow-pasture, and contained a good deal of cultivation. After a ride of twenty-five miles we reached the mean village of Nere, situated at the forks of

this stream in a range of hills connected with the great mountain Savalan. Our course from Ardebeel thus far was about south-west.

At Nere we with difficulty procured some corn to feed our horses, and some cakes and butter for ourselves ; after which, about noon, we again proceeded, ascending by a long and very rough road to the top of the range above spoken of, which proved to be a bleak and barren track rising in frequent swells for several miles, and chiefly composed of a black basaltic rock. This terminated in a tedious and stony descent, at the foot of which lay several vallies covered with pasture. The road wound among these for some miles, and then turning sharp up a short hill, led us down into the extensive plains of Sir-āb.

The extensive plain of Sir-āb, as we viewed it from the gorge above it, appeared to be well cultivated, and to produce rich crops. There were many villages scattered over its surface, but no gardens to be seen, nor indeed a tree of any description, except a few poplars and willows, here and there fringing the banks of the streams.

We travelled along this plain till near sunset, when having performed a day's journey of full fifty miles, we thought it advisable to rest our wearied horses, and alighted at a small village ; where, upon promising to pay for what we required, we were accommodated with very decent quarters, and provisions for ourselves and our horses.

A minute account of our progress would afford the reader little amusement ; we had a long hot ride the next day over low gravelly hills till noon, when we halted for half an hour at a small village in a little bit of meadow land, and got a refreshing drink of butter-milk and water.

We then continued our way to No-deh, a village forty miles from Sir-āb, and an equal distance from Tabreez, where finding our horses much fatigued from heat and want of their usual food, we resolved to halt for the remainder of the day. The people here were very reluctant to admit us ; they feared and suspected us ; nor was it till after much parley, and advancing the money for our entertainment, that they assigned us quarters, and furnished us with provisions.

We learnt upon enquiry that the practice of levying soorsaut and other arbitrary exactions for the use of government and its servants, is to the full as prevalent here as elsewhere in Persia, and they no doubt feared the requisition we made was to be furnished on the same terms ; even after we had paid them for what we had got, their suspicions were not removed ; I wanted, if possible, to have hired a horse for next day's journey, and to have left one of mine to be taken up by my baggage after a day's rest ; but they could not be prevailed upon to trust me. It was with great difficulty we procured a guide to accompany us until morning, that we might not stray from our road in the night.

July 12th. We got on horseback by three o'clock in the morning, and favoured by the light of a clear moon, proceeded fully twelve miles before the sun got warm. A steep and stony path then carried us down into a deep valley, terminating a circular basin, which contained a small piece of water surrounded with rich meadows. This small chummun or meadow, on which there were multitudes of animals grazing, is connected with the great Chummun-e-Oojan, and here the path falls into the high road between Tehran and Tabreez, which passes through the plain of Oojan.

We rested at an old caravansery situated at the foot of a steep hill, and considered halfway between No-deh and Tabreez ; it is a large square building entirely covered in from the weather by a spacious vaulted roof, and is capable of containing a great number of men and cattle. After having refreshed our horses by a feed of corn and a short halt, we proceeded for five miles across a low grassy plain, crossed a long track of gravelly and calcareous hillocks, for eight or ten miles, to a large village called Bosmeit, where there are some gardens, watered by a copious stream, and which is said to be seven miles distant from Tabreez.

The last part of our journey from the caravansery, had been painful from the excessive heat, reflected by a light-coloured gravelly soil ; and we found the succeeding five or six miles equally toilsome, the road being very stony, and our horses much fatigued ; but the last mile or two led us along a broad highway, bordered by gardens,

the green foliage of which refreshed our sight, although the heat was as great as ever. This tract of gardens and orchards which fringes the banks of a stream that waters Tabreez, gives to the approach on this side a richness of effect which seldom belongs to a town in Persia. On reaching the top of the last height above the city, we saw beneath us a dark green mass of foliage, spangled with white dwellings, which glittered in the sun-shine, and close to this stood the city of Tabreez, the huge old ark (or palace) and several mosques and minarets rising above the mass of flat-roofed and mud-built houses. Beyond this lay the extensive plains of Tabreez, undulating with vapours raised by the heat of the sun, and ending in the great lake of Ooroomia; very remote ranges of high hills bounded the whole.

But I had little time to think of the picturesque; the day was burning hot, we were fatigued and thirsty, and I have seldom felt greater satisfaction, than when I reached the gate of the city. I soon found my way to the English residency, where, dismounting from my weary horse, I experienced the warmest welcome from Capt. George Willock, the brother of Mr. Henry Willock, the charge d'affaires.

CHAP. XXI.

THE AUTHOR FINDS MR. WILLOCK AND DR. MACNIEL HAD LEFT PERSIA. — CAUSES OF THAT MEASURE. — APPLICATION TO THE CAIMOOKAN REGARDING THE AUTHOR'S TREATMENT AT RESHT. — HIS CONDUCT ON THE OCCASION. — CHARACTER OF THE CAIMOOKAN. — MR. MARTIN THE MISSIONARY. — MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCE ABBAS MEERZA. — CHARACTER OF THAT PRINCE. — WAR WITH TURKEY. — CAUSES. — PROGRESS OF THE WAR. — EPIDEMIC CHOLERA — ATTACKS THE PRINCE'S CAMP. — ITS PROGRESS.

THE pleasure, which it may be imagined I felt, at being restored to the society of friends, and again hearing the sound of my native language, after so many toils and dangers, was grievously alloyed by a disappointment which awaited me at this place. I found that Mr. Willock, the charge d'affaires, and Dr. Macniel, both of whom, on many accounts, I had been most anxious to meet, had, in reality, quitted Persia, and were then on their way to England.

Upon enquiring into the causes of this measure, I was not a little surprised to find that the story of my friend the dervish, at Balfroosh, was much nearer the truth than might have been expected in such a quarter. It appeared, that demands for certain arrears of subsidy had been made by the king of Persia upon Mr. Willock, who, from circumstances not necessary to relate here, could not comply with them. His majesty, badly advised by persons whom it ill became to urge any measure hostile or insulting to England, forgot his own dignity so far, as to send a message to Mr. Willock, of a very uncourteous and even a threatening nature. Mr. Willock declared that his free agency was entirely done away, and demanded his passports and a *mehmandar*, that he might leave the country. His firmness brought the semi-barbarous court to its senses; the shah disavowed his message, and showed to the astonished Persians the extraordinary

spectacle of their "king of kings," prevaricating, and eating his own words, before the representative of a distant nation, unsupported by the smallest force.

But notwithstanding the shah's altered conduct, there were other circumstances which induced Mr. Willock to persevere in his resolution of communicating in person with his own government. His brother, therefore, Captain George Willock, was left in charge of the establishment in Persia, and the charge d'affaires himself, accompanied by Dr. Macneil, who had been his sole companion at Tehran during the trying period of his altercation with the king, took his departure for England more than two months before my arrival at Tabreez.

I found that a good deal of anxiety had been felt on my account by the gentlemen at this place, in consequence of the total want of intelligence regarding me for so long a period, and I lost no time in relating to Captain Willock the indignities I had suffered in Gheelan, in order that a representation of all the circumstances might be laid before the shah. For this purpose, a memorial, which I drew up, was translated into Persian, and Captain Willock took the earliest opportunity of laying it before the caimookan, or chief minister of Abbas Meerza, who showed great astonishment at the facts which it stated, and appeared inclined to take the matter up in a warm manner.

A day or two afterwards I accompanied Captain Willock and some other English gentlemen to dine with the caimookan, and that nobleman questioned me very minutely regarding all the circumstances of my detention. He dwelt particularly upon my attempt at escaping, my recapture and its consequences; but it was apparent to all, that though he affected to be greatly shocked at the treatment which I had experienced, and swore at, and abused those who had inflicted it, the old gentleman seemed to feel something of a malicious pleasure, in bringing to notice the awkward and humiliating predicament in which I must have stood. He made me repeat, again and again, all that had happened at the moment of my recapture, as well as when I was brought before the Talish chief Mahomed Khan; and insisted on my describing my journey back to

Resht, riding double with my servant, on the pack-horses that were pressed for us. "Wullah!" exclaimed he; "and did they really beat you? What, beat you hard? Poor fellow! what wretches! And they tied your hands too? Ahi, ahi! unfortunate and unhappy! you have truly suffered greatly. And the gholaums would only give one horse between you both? and they, forsooth, rode yours all the way? And your feet were sadly bruised? By the head of the shah, they deserve to be punished." With that he laughed heartily, and it soon became clear enough, that whatever sympathy or indignation he might profess, no hearty support was to be expected from him, and that he rather, on the whole, enjoyed the scrape I had got into.

There did not, indeed, appear to be any strong disposition on the part of government to do me justice. Captain Willock made strong representations to the king, but the only reply returned was, that the business had been settled already by prince Mahomed Reza Meerza and his minister Meerza Tukee; that I had been dismissed with presents, and expressed myself satisfied, so that nothing further could be done. Thus the circumstance of my having received a paltry present from the prince, which could not, without a serious affront, have been refused, and which was almost absolutely necessary to enable me to quit Gheelan, was construed into an unqualified expression of satisfaction at the reparation made to me. It was quite clear, from this conclusion of theirs, that no justice was to have been expected at all from the Persian court, and that I had reason to congratulate myself at having escaped so well as I did.

I learned afterwards, that the vizier Ahmed Khan had been displaced and punished, whether on my account or not, I do not know; and that shortly after, the mal-administration of Gheelan was so notorious, that the king was forced to deprive both the princes of their government, and to disgrace them.

The caimookan, better known by the title of Meerza Buzoorg, was acknowledged by every one to have been a man of very great abilities. The early part of his life was passed in the service of Lootf Allee Khan, Zund, who disputed the crown of Persia, unsuccessfully,

with the late monarch Aga Mahomed Khan; and of whom he always talked with affectionate esteem. I heard little of Meerza Buzoorg's history, until he had risen high in estimation with the reigning family, and was appointed vizier to Abbas Meerza, prince royal of Persia, with the title of caimookan.* It is said he aimed at the high honour of replacing Meerza Sheffeeah, the late sudr azim, or prime minister of the kingdom, and that he was greatly disappointed at not succeeding; but the king, who fully appreciated his talents, in placing him on the frontiers of the kingdom, in a province so important as Azerbaijan, certainly gave him the post of danger and of honour.

When first he entered the service of Abbas Meerza, he attempted, it is said, to carry on business by opposing that prince respectfully, but firmly, when in the wrong; but finding this method rendered ineffectual by the prince's natural obstinacy, he altered his plan, and studying to gain his confidence, endeavoured to lead him insensibly to the points he wished. In this object he completely succeeded; the prince soon left every thing to his care; he exclusively directed the territorial and revenue departments, and became the dispenser of justice as well as favour. All petitions were, by the prince's order, brought to the caimookan, and he decided on them without appeal. The quantity of business which he got through was astonishing; but he still had enough to struggle with in the fickle temper of the prince, which being worked upon by flatterers and ill-disposed advisers, often thwarted the good which the minister had been labouring to produce. In spite, however, of all this, the province of Azerbaijan prospered, and has greatly improved under his able superintendence.

The minister was a man of violent passions, but disposed to justice, and strongly imbued with a desire for the prosperity of his country. He considered, in truth, his own glory as identified with that of Persia; he might, and indeed it is said he has occasionally been guilty of murder, but the world would not have bribed him to betray his country. It is said that he entertained* favourable sentiments towards the English nation, but he hated the Russians, and

* Signifying: "Governor," "Overseer."

particularly General Yermoloff, perhaps because of their successful attacks upon Persia.

For some time past, the caimookan, who always lived unostentatiously, had kept more than usually retired ; it was said that he was engaged in writing a book, the occasion of which was singular enough.

The well known zealous missionary, the Rev. Mr. Martin, when he resided in Persia, was accustomed to converse with the moollahs and doctors of the law, on points regarding the Christian and Mahomedan faiths ; and the acuteness of his reasoning, combined with the perfect knowledge he possessed of Persian and Arabic, often confounded the most learned advocates of the korān. When this gentleman quitted Tabreez, he left, in the hands of the moollahs, a treatise written in Persian, and containing a summary of the arguments he had used in conversation against the Mahomedan religion, requesting them to answer it if they could.

There were many meetings and much consultation among the learned, but they could come to no satisfactory conclusion. The caimookan sent a copy of the treatise to some moollahs of equal repute for learning and orthodoxy, at Kerbela, but after two or three years it was returned without any reply that satisfied even themselves. He then resolved to take the cudgels up himself, and wrote much, but still without effect ; and it has been said that this matter cost him more sleepless nights than all his state business.

When I arrived at Tabreez, he was still thus engaged, and publicly announced the object of his labours. But he was not destined to finish them. The epidemic cholera, which soon after began to rage in that city, attacked him ; he was seventy years of age, and, not content with having the assistance of an English medical gentleman attached to the prince's court, he submitted to the rough remedies of his native doctors, which soon reduced the old man to extremity. He died on the 14th of August, 1822, leaving the prince bereaved of his most able and faithful servant, without one person of talents about him, to supply his place.

The city of Tabreez is the capital of Azerbaijan, the most important province of Persia, and may be at present considered the

first in the kingdom. It is of great antiquity and no small celebrity in eastern story. It was a favourite residence of Zobeide, the wife of Haroun al Raschi, so well known to all readers of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments." But it has so often been described, and there is really so little remarkable about it, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it here.

One building, however, deserves to be mentioned, as having probably been built by orders of Zobeide for the royal residence. It is at present called the ark, or palace, and is really a noble mass of masonry, though now greatly shook by earthquakes, rising to a great height above the city, without the walls of which it now stands.

From this commanding station, an excellent panoramic view of the city and its environs may be obtained, and I must say that there are few Persian towns in better order, or less disfigured with ruins within their walls; while the numerous gardens, interspersed with little white buildings, that surround it, enliven and give it an uncommon air of neatness and comfort.

The ark was also an object of interest, from containing the arsenal and workshops belonging to it. So much has been said about the military establishment of Abbas Meerza, and the pains he has taken to introduce European improvements into its various departments, that it might be supposed the arsenal and magazines would be upon a scale of considerable extent; but we found the whole trifling to a degree hardly to be credited, and calculated to excite little else than contempt. While each department had the advantage of European superintendence, however small it might be, it was at least kept in good order; but it was now under the management of natives, and we could detect in it the commencement of that disorganization which steals over an establishment when the science which formed it has been lost, and its place supplied by a mere mechanical attention which keeps to forms, but is ignorant of principles.

The magazines, if such they might be termed, were almost empty, the few stores they had contained having been sent along with the army, at this time on service against the Turks. These

stores, we understood, did not exceed thirty rounds of ball-cartridge for each man of the regular infantry, and about two hundred rounds of ammunition per gun for his artillery, amounting to about twenty pieces. It will be apt to excite a smile to hear of such preparations against a powerful empire.

The operations we saw in progress were not calculated to inspire more respect. In one place we observed *two* men casting musket-bullets; in another, about a hundred muskets in preparation; in a third, one or two lazy workmen employed in fitting handles to sword-blades. In the chief room there were a few hundred rounds of cannister-shot, with some English shrapnel and other shells. The whole bore a greater resemblance to a gentleman's shooting-closet, furnished with specimens of various warlike instruments, than to the arsenal of a prince carrying on war against a powerful neighbour.

It would indeed have been unreasonable to expect more important results from the limited means that were applied to these operations. As an instance, I may mention that we heard the chief of the gunsmith's department, requiring money, was furnished with four hundred *tomauns*, or about 220*l.* sterling, for the purpose of expediting a certain number of fire-arms. The whole sum was quickly expended in materials. A short time afterwards, he was called upon to deliver all the arms that were ready. The chief gunsmith himself waited on the prince to inform him, not only that none were ready, but that none could be furnished until more money should be supplied. "More money!" exclaimed the prince; "why, what have you done with all that great sum I gave you the other day?"

The state of the army, with regard to pay, was exactly the same; the troops were scarcely furnished with enough to purchase themselves provisions. I learned, that, at the commencement of this Turkish campaign, previous to their marching from Khooee towards the frontier, a distribution had been made of one *tomaun*, or about eleven shillings sterling per man. The consequence was, that the army was dispirited, and desertions to a great extent were constantly taking place.

If I may believe universal report, the character of Abbas Meerza has been as much overrated in Europe as the quality and extent of his military establishment. He has been decked out with virtues and high qualities to which he has no just claim. Strength, activity, and greatness of mind have been attributed to him, as well as steadiness and perseverance; and an anxious, disinterested desire to improve the condition of his country. But whatever hopes may have been excited at the commencement of his career, they have been totally disappointed by his conduct in later years. It has become certain that he has neither much talent to devise useful measures himself, nor steadiness to carry into operation those suggested by others; for although he readily lends an ear to them when proposed, he is as easily swayed in an opposite way by the next adviser. Thus a minister, who, satisfied with the assent which his suggestions may have received from the prince, has begun to carry them into effect, may, at the next audience, find the whole affair forgotten, or talked of as a matter past and gone, to be thought of no more.

The eagerness with which Abbas Meerza sought to introduce European discipline among his troops, appears to have originated at least as much in a childish desire for novelty, as in any conviction of its superiority, or anxiety for solid improvement. Thus, although at first, while danger from the Russian successes was imminent, he displayed some degree of steadiness in prosecuting what seemed to be his favourite object, the moment this peril was at an end, he was so far from persevering in the system, or endeavouring to maintain the degree of discipline which his troops had acquired from the unwearied exertions of the English officers in his service, that he treated these officers not only with inattention, but suspicion; and, to avoid the necessity of paying his troops regularly, he sent them to their homes, where they remained for years, undisciplined and uncalled for.

In point of personal courage, the prince is said to be far from pre-eminent, and his moral conduct is not less objectionable, in any respect, than that of his countrymen in general. He is subject,

in so high a degree, to that common failing of princes, a love of flattery, and a dislike to listen to disagreeable truths, that he cannot bear any one about him whose powers of mind, or openness of character, throws restraint upon his own caprices; hence most men of abilities have been driven from his councils, and even the old caimookan was forced to manœuvre, and earn his confidence by address.

I have understood that he is not by any means naturally penurious. Most people indeed allow, that, though he is not exempt from the meanness common to his countrymen, he is rather disposed to be liberal in his dealings. But he is a wretched economist, and dissipates a large income in a way that redounds neither to his credit nor advantage. He unfortunately does not possess that happy graciousness of manner which doubles the value of a gift, and makes a trifle seem precious; on the contrary, from some unlucky want of address, a boon from his hand seems rather to lose than improve in value; and a petitioner, although successful, often retires more disgusted with his reception than gratified by his success. These defects have unquestionably very much hurt the popularity of Abbas Meerza; and were it not, that, on the death of his father, he probably will be put in possession of more solid means of support than his own resources can supply, his success in the anticipated struggle for the throne would be very questionable.

It is proper to state, that these remarks on the character of Abbas Meerza are derived entirely from conversation with my acquaintances, both European and native, at Tabreez, who had the best means of appreciating it. For my own part, I did not see the prince; he was absent with his army on an expedition against the Turks, with whom he had gone to war; and as the causes and progress of this war are perhaps not generally known, it may not be considered impertinent to relate them shortly here.

The alleged causes of complaint were as follows: that Saduck Pashah, a relation of the late Pashah of Bagdad, having taken refuge in the Persian territories from the persecution of Daood Pashah, was protected by Abbas Meerza, who procured from the king his

father a letter to the Porte, soliciting pardon and favour for the young man, and forwarded him to the Turkish frontiers, under convoy of a Persian officer. Saduck Pashah, however, alarmed at certain appearances of treachery, fled back to the Persian territories, whither he was pursued by the Turks, who imprisoned the officer of Abbas Meerza, and having carried Saduck Pashah to the town of Tocat, put him there to death. So signal an affront demanded reparation.

It was also alleged, that the Persian pilgrims to Mecca, passing through the Turkish dominions on their way to Damascus, had suffered many wanton insults ; and that in particular, certain of the king of Persia's wives, with other women of rank, proceeding on this holy journey, had been grossly affronted by the Turkish custom-house officers. These men believing or affecting to believe, that the ladies were guilty of smuggling shawls and other dutyable articles, amongst their baggage, which it appears is a custom that prevails in Persia as well as in other countries, insisted upon entering and examining the tents ; nor would they have been dissuaded from this outrage, had not the pilgrims mustered in a body, and sworn rather to die round the tent, than permit it to be entered.

But the true cause of the war is, more probably, to be found in the jealousy which Abbas Meerza conceived for the fame and advantage which his brother Mahomed Allee Meerza, the warlike governor of Kermanshah, had acquired by his expeditions against the Turks in that quarter. For some time he had remonstrated with that prince against this war ; but finding his own military reputation was rather suffering, while that of Mahomed Allee Meerza was daily increasing by his exploits, he determined to try his own fortune ; and accordingly in the year 1821, without any formal declaration, entered the Turkish territories, laid siege to, and took the fortress of Bayazeed, while one of his generals penetrating towards Diarbekr, plundered the villages, and drove away the cattle. This general, however, receiving some check, and being unsupported by the prince, was forced to retreat, and, falling into an ambuscade, was cut to pieces, so that the campaign closed with little advantage to either party.

In return for this aggression, the Porte ordered all the property of Persian merchants in Turkey to be confiscated, and the merchants themselves to be detained as prisoners; the last part of the order was not, I believe, carried into effect, but these reprisals served as another ground of complaint, and a further reason for prosecuting the war.

At the period of my arrival at Tabreez little had been done. The Turks, indeed, had roused themselves, and raised an army, said to consist of forty thousand men, to repulse and punish the Persians, but they were of wretched quality, the sweepings of the gaols and streets of Constantinople, driven by the whip to their duty. Abbas Meerza had taken the field with nearly an equal number of men, including his regular batalions, and twenty-two guns, chiefly horse artillery; but it was observed that he showed no great anxiety to meet the enemy.

The chief obstacle he had to contend with was want of money; this most important article was so scarce, that, as I was assured by the beglerbeggee, small bills, not exceeding five or ten pounds sterling, on the treasury, could not be discharged; nor was there any supply to be raised in the city, then desolated by the epidemic cholera. The prince in his distress applied to the king, who, as the greatest possible favour, sent him two thousand tomauns, or about eleven hundred pounds sterling. In another way his majesty was more liberal, for he ordered one of his officers, Allah Yar Khan, with fifteen thousand men, to march to his assistance. This was a species of aid by no means to the prince's taste; and he is said to have inveighed bitterly against his royal father, for making use of such a *ruse de guerre*, and choosing a moment of so great necessity to quarter upon him a large body of worthless troops, who would only plunder and impoverish the country.

The campaign, after all, had a speedier termination than might have been expected. The Turkish army had advanced to besiege Topra Kallah, a fort of their own, which had been taken some time before by the Sirdar of Erivan, and was then in possession of the Persians. The prince, when he quitted the town of Khooee, where his army was assembled, advanced to relieve it. When the armies approached

each other, a skirmish of cavalry took place, in which the Turks had the advantage; this gave them courage to offer battle. They drew out their troops before the fort, leaving their camp in its rear; their right was commanded by the Pashah of Van, their centre by the Seraskier, and their left by Chuppan Oglu. The prince placed a battery of twelve-pounders on the right, which was under command of Hoossain Khan, sirdar of Erivan, whose brother was posted on the left, while himself in person took charge of the centre.

The Turks appear to have commenced with an attack of cavalry headed by a few Delhees; and their artillery began to fire long before the Persians were within range. The latter did not return a gun until they were within eight or nine hundred yards of the enemy, when they fired at the mass, and put them into confusion. The Russian batalion, which was stationed behind the guns, then moved forward in the intervals, and was supported by the Serbaz or Persian infantry, to storm a hillock in front of the Turkish position, but the latter did not stand a moment to receive them, they broke and fled, pursued by the Persian cavalry, who destroyed about two thousand five hundred of them, and took a great many prisoners, along with the whole camp and baggage. The Turks appear to have in some degree anticipated, or at least prepared for this defeat, for they had removed their most valuable effects; their army never attempted to form again, but totally and entirely dispersed.

Great praise was given on this occasion to one Hadjee Beg, a captain in the artillery, who commanded a brigade of four twelve-pounders, the showers of grape from which are said to have done great execution. This officer, who had risen entirely by his own merit, and thereby had attracted the envy of most of those who surrounded the prince, furnished on one occasion, in his own person, a striking instance of the vicious and degrading system practised at despotic courts. Naturally of an independent spirit, he was too free spoken for the situation in which he had been placed, and once upon the parade being unjustly abused by an ignorant young coxcomb of the royal tribe, who was his superior in rank, he returned him a spirited answer. The young man, stung by the reproof, turned to his attendants,

and exclaimed, "Do you hear that impudent fellow, daring to reply "to me? Seize him; turn up his heels immediately, and give him a „ flogging." Accordingly this valuable officer was immediately seized, thrown down, and punished like the meanest groom.

The prince pursued his success as far as the pass of Deeār, about three days' march from Topra Kallah, when the epidemic cholera, which had appeared in his camp even previous to the action, now broke out violently, and he thought fit to commence a retrograde movement to Khooee. From that moment the Persian army also appears to have been virtually dissolved; the men dropt off rapidly, and whole troops deserted to return to their homes, so that by the time he reached Kooce, he had scarcely an army to dismiss. The loss by disease during this retreat was certainly great, but has been variously represented. The most probable accounts set it down at about four thousand men, or about a tenth part of the whole force: in some battalions three hundred out of one thousand died, and the rear of their line of march was strewed with dead bodies, as if it had been all the way in action.

Major Monteith, of the Madras engineers, and myself, were near Khooee at the time of this retreat, and witnessed the consternation that was caused by the disease. At first single horsemen began to pass us on our road, at a quick disordered pace; then small parties of two or three together rode by, and in this way more than a thousand passed the village at which we halted during the first night. The next day the fugitives were more numerous, and the whole road, as it wound through an extensive plain, was dotted with them in smaller or larger parties. Many of them were loaded with plunder, or led along captured horses; but all had a certain air of hurry that indicated alarm. The towns and villages on the road shut their gates as they passed, and would give them no admittance: besides being dreaded as likely to commit the outrages which successful troops are prone to, they were looked upon as persons infected. I must, however, say, that they behaved themselves, as far as we heard, in a very orderly manner; not a single instance of violence came to our knowledge.

But as the fugitives passed by or through the different towns, they brought the news of death along with them ; many of the inhabitants had relatives in the camp ; and in the town of Morand, and the villages around it, we heard the frequent howling and lamentations which these tidings produced. As to the prince, we learned that he had quitted the camp as soon as he found the disease prevailing strongly. He kept encamping upon the heights, apart from all, until he reached Khooee, where he halted for some time, and then again moved his camp to the mountains in the vicinity, where the air was esteemed more healthy.

It is difficult to say how or from whence the epidemic cholera, that scourge of the east, reached Tabreez. It was supposed to have travelled from Bagdad along the caravan road, by Hamadan and Sennah ; but no accounts to be at all depended on could be obtained of its gradual progress. A whisper had gone forth that the disease had appeared in the town as early as the 12th of July ; but a week made it no longer doubtful, and upon our return to Tabreez on the 24th, after a short absence, we understood that from fifteen to thirty were daily dying of cholera.

A panic now commenced, and the authorities of the place, instead of endeavouring to restore confidence, and maintain order in the prince's absence, encouraged the inhabitants to quit the city. The old caimookan set the example, by ordering away the prince's harem, and announcing his intention to follow it ; he did not, however, in his alarm, neglect his English friends, but sent a message, advising them to follow his example, and offering a garden in the country for their accommodation.

During the next ten days the state of the distemper varied greatly ; sometimes the fatal appearances diminished so much, that it was even doubted whether the alarm had not been a false one ; the sick were attacked with vertigo and sickness, which was attributed to the powerful effect of the sun's rays, and though some died, yet more recovered, without having evinced many of those more peculiar and alarming symptoms which generally mark the disease. By degrees, however, these symptoms appeared ; violent vomiting,

accompanied with painful cramps, damp clammy sweats, cold and bloodless extremities, burning heat at stomach, a sunken death-like countenance, cessation of all the pulses ; these, and other striking characteristics of this fearful disease, marked the fatal cases, and terminated in death.

Often when the disease was at its height, the first seizure, indicated by vertigo, proved fatal at once. Several instances came to our knowledge of persons thus attacked in the streets, who fell down senseless, and never recovered.

The treatment pursued by the natives was, in all cases, the same which we had remarked in other parts of Persia. The moment a person was attacked, they seized him, and drenched him in cold water, made colder by ice, which is abundant in Tabreez ; verjuice was thrust down his throat when the unhappy patient could swallow, and ice was often heaped upon the stomach. A chill was thus given which probably aided the disease, the nature of which is to drive the circulation from the surface and extremities. This discipline, however injurious in cases of true cholera, was salutary and successful in cases of mere vertigo, which, from the heat at mid-day in the sun, was not unfrequent ; and the occasional cures thus performed on persons supposed to be labouring under cholera, strengthened the faith of the natives in their own practice.

During this time the natives, panic-struck, fled in crowds from their homes, until the city became a desert.

CHAP. XXII.

DEATH OF THE CAIMOOKAN.—STORY OF MUSHEDDEE ALLEE AKBAR.—CLIMATE OF TABREEZ.—MURDER OF A PERSIAN.—PRICE OF BLOOD.—REVENGE OF AN OLD WOMAN.—EXPEDITION TO THE LAKE SHAAHEE.—LAKE DESCRIBED.—DISTRICTS AROUND IT.—OOROOMIA.—SELMART.—A PECULIAR AND SAVAGE RACE OF CHRISTIANS.—THEIR HABITS.—ARMY OF ALLA YAR KHAN SEIZED WITH CHOLERA.—THE AUTHOR RETURNS TO TABREEZ.—QUITS IT TO RETURN TO EUROPE.

ON the 5th of August, I left Tabreez in company with Major Monteith to visit the lake Shahee or Ooroomia, and survey the country in its vicinity. We returned on the 15th, and found that though the disease had greatly diminished, it still existed in the city, and raged in several of the villages round about. At this time, too, we heard that the old caimookan had fallen a victim to it, or rather to the wretched drenching system which was most zealously pursued in his case; for, though Dr. Cormack was called in to prescribe for him, the moment his back was turned, five or six females of the family took the affair into their own hands, and heaping ice on the poor old gentleman fairly froze the life out of his body.

The disease did not stop at Tabreez. We heard that it spread into Gheelan, attacking my old friends in the city of Resht, and that in spite of a sort of quarantine established at Zenjan upon the road, it had made its way into the king's camp at Sultania, to the great horror and alarm of his majesty.

Amongst the multitude that died of this disease, there was one old man, whose story was somewhat singular. His name was Mushedee Allee Akbar, he was of low origin, and had once served as cook to an English officer, at the court of Abbas Meerza, after which, he supported himself by keeping a small cook's shop in the bazar. It happened that he had a very pretty daughter, who, being observed

by one of the caterers for the royal seraglio, was spirited away, removed to the harem, and became, as is usual in such cases, one of the king's wives. The poor father was by no means satisfied when he heard of the high promotion which his daughter had attained, and resolved to leave no means untried for recovering her. Aware that this was quite out of the question without a propitiating present, he set himself to work hard for a considerable time, almost starving himself to save every penny ; and by these means, and the sale of all he had, he contrived to raise seventy tomauns, with which he went to court to ransom back his child.

With some difficulty he obtained access to the presence, and told his business ; upon which the shah, flying into a huge passion, real or pretended, exclaimed, " What ! you old wretch, is the honour " done to you by the king of kings in making your daughter his " wife not enough ? but you, forsooth, must be discontented, and " wish to have her back again ! you must be taught more wisdom. " Here," cried he to the attendants, " take that old vagabond, and " beat him soundly." The poor man's heels were instantly tript up, and he received a severe bastinado on the soles of his feet. After this cruel operation, which the shah very calmly witnessed, his majesty had the seventy tomauns taken from him, and ordered him to be turned out of the palace, saying, " You old idiot, you have been " well served for your folly ; you have sold all you had to take your " daughter from a situation where she was as well as possible, and " you have lost your money and your pains ; get home with you to " your business, and don't play the fool so again."

If we were to judge by appearances, it is difficult to conceive how an epidemic disease could possibly exist at this time of the year in or about Tabreez ; for every thing seemed calculated to render it healthy. The country is dry and open, without either wood or stagnant water to create unwholesome exhalations ; the heat within doors never exceeded 84°, and seldom rose above 80°, and a breeze from the north-east, which prevails almost constantly from March till August inclusive, continued to blow with violence all the time I remained.

I was informed that the heat seldom at any time rises above 90°, and but very rarely reaches that point. Leslie's hygrometer varied from 50 to 60°. The cold of winter is said to be severe, but dry; the mercury occasionally falling to 10 or 15° below zero. The snow generally continues long on the ground in the vicinity of the town. I was told that the year before I was at Tabreez, it lay for nearly six months together.

While we remained in this place, it happened that a Persian servant, belonging to one of the English gentlemen residing there, having got into a quarrel with some of the natives in a garden near the town, stabbed a young man in the back, so severely, that he died of the wound next day. In such cases, the law gives up the murderer to the kindred of the dead, permitting them to satisfy their vengeance by putting him to death, or to compound for his life for such ransom as may be agreed upon; and the event afforded us an opportunity of observing the disgusting coolness with which Mahometans bargain for the life of a human being.

In the present instance, as the culprit was the servant of an English gentleman, supposed to be able and willing to pay well for the life of his servant, every means in their power was resorted to, to increase the anxiety which was undoubtedly felt for the unhappy man. The relatives pretended to be implacable, and at first would not hear of a compromise on any terms. By-and-bye, however, intimation was privately given, that 200 tomauns (110*l.* sterling), might possibly be accepted; and finally, seeing that the gentleman, who was on his guard, was not to be taken in by their threats, they settled the business on receiving 70 tomauns, or near 40*l.* sterling.

Another English gentleman did not get off so cheaply on a similar occasion. His servant, an European, of a violent character, either by accident, or in anger, killed a Mahometan, under circumstances of a very suspicious nature. He was instantly seized, and would have certainly been put to death, had not his master come forward with about 150*l.*; nor would the matter have been so easily arranged, had not the murdered Mussulman been a native of some

distant province, so that his relations were not by to urge their right for the price of blood.

A compromise of money is not, however, always accepted. I was informed that not very long before, in this very town, a young man having been assassinated, his mother, an old woman, his only relative, came forward and demanded the life of his murderer. The poor wretch was accordingly given up to her, and she, though very indigent, was so far from agreeing to any compromise, that nothing would content her but being herself the executioner. She had him held while she stabbed him in fifty places with a knife, which she then drew between her lips, as if to slake her thirst of revenge with the blood of her victim.

The expedition which Major Monteith and myself made to the northern shore of the great lake Shahee, or Ooroomea, introduced us to a new part of the country. The lake itself is an object of considerable interest; I am not acquainted with its dimensions, but it presents a noble expanse of water, surrounded by picturesque mountains and vallies, which are fertile and well filled with villages. But it was only on some parts of its shores that these could be distinguished, for towards the south, the water stretched far beyond the range of vision.

The waters of this lake, which, like those of the sea, appear of a dark blue colour, streaked with green, according as the light falls on them, are perfectly clear, and intensely salt; but I do not know the quantity, or exact nature of the substances which they hold in solution. A great quantity of salt is deposited upon the shores, and a pavement or flooring, as it were, of salt, might be seen covering the bottom for a considerable distance under the water. In some places there was an incrustation of salt towards the margin, from under which, when broken, thick concentrated brine rushed out, and the deposition of salt and saline efflorescence extended in some places many hundred yards from the water's edge, incircling it with a belt of glittering white. No fish or living thing, as far as is known, is found in this fine lake.

We were informed that the waters of this lake have decreased

very much within these twelve or fourteen years, retiring and leaving the shore dry, in some places, to a distance of full five hundred yards. We halted one day at the village of Sheraff Khaneh, which was built upon a bank, once overhanging the water, but it had now retired, leaving a mud beach, covered with salt or saline efflorescence, of many hundred yards in breadth.

We heard no good reason assigned for this diminution of the water. It was indeed said, that many of the rivers which flow into the lake are almost exhausted in irrigating the increased cultivation upon the banks; but this cannot solve the difficulty; because in former times cultivation was even more extensive without such an effect being produced. The natives, who are always ready to give a marvellous turn to such phenomena, believe that a great beast, which lives in the lake, drinks up its waters, and will, in time, consume them entirely. Indeed, according to the accounts of the villagers, this was at one time almost done. They say, that a good many years ago, the people who lived near its banks were astonished one morning at not seeing the lake, as usual, but that on running to what had been its bank, they saw the great beast drinking hard at it. They were in great consternation for a while, but next day the lake returned to its former bounds; and, if we may judge from appearances, the thirst of the monster has been but moderate ever since, for the diminution, though regular, has been comparatively small.

This lake is surrounded by some of the most fertile districts in Persia. Maragha, on the south east, yields 80,000 tomauns annually to the crown. Ooroomea, on the west, containing four hundred villages, gives 65,000. Selmast, further to the north, which contains between three and four hundred large and populous villages, contributes only 25,000. The north-western arm of the lake reaches to within fifteen miles of the town of Selmast, which stands by a river that might easily be made navigable. Several other streams which fall into the lake, are equally capable of this improvement, by which the produce of the rich, well-cultivated vallies through which they run, now almost valueless, might be brought to an advantageous market.

It is difficult, indeed, to conceive a finer subject for inland navigation than this lake and its tributary streams afford. The country, from Tabreez to its bank, is very level, and the river Adjai which passes the town, flowing for most part of the way in a deep loamy bed, might easily be converted into, or made to feed a canal ; and thus the valuable produce of all the districts around the lake of Oorooma, might be brought to the capital at a trifling expence. But the spirit of enterprize necessary to carry through so extensive and useful a project, is not to be looked for in the meridian of a despotic and unstable government ; and it is absurd to waste time in speculating on the capabilities of Persia for such refined improvements, when there does not appear to be the remotest chance of a beneficial change in the nature of her government, or the condition of her people.

So little is the value of this large sheet of water felt, that there was not at this time, as we were told, a single boat upon it. There had been but two, and those of most clumsy construction. One of them had been wrecked only the year before, with a loss of eight men ; the other, I believe, had rotted at an earlier period ; but no one ventured to replace them by new vessels, because they feared that the government would impose heavy duties upon the projectors, and so constantly require the boats themselves for service, that they would become sources of loss instead of profit.

The people on the west side of this lake, including the districts of Oorooma and Selmast, are represented as extremely rude and savage ; and there are more murders in the town of Oorooma than in any other city of Persia. This is said to arise from its being inhabited by a number of chiefs of tribes, who having their property in the neighbourhood, live in large palaces, surrounded by their immediate retainers. They have always feuds with one another, so that their followers are constantly quarrelling and cutting each others throats. The town of Oorooma contains about 20,000 inhabitants, and is governed by a chief of the Affshār tribe, who, however, is quite unable to restrain the turbulent spirits with whom he has to deal.

The town of Selmast contains about 1,500 families, of which 200 are Christians. There are altogether about 1,500 Christian families in

the district, of which 800 are Nestorians ; the rest are Armenians, or Nestorians who have entered the Roman Catholic church, and who are placed under the pastoral charge of a bishop appointed from Rome. The people in this district are remarkable for being the greatest thieves and vagabonds in this part of the country ; they are coiners, jugglers, mountebanks ; and practise all manner of deceptions. A certain number of them go every year into Turkey as professional beggars, and they practise that art so successfully, that they are said one year to have brought back 20,000 tomauns, (11,000% sterling) in cash.

During the time we were on this expedition, a Koordish chief, from Banskallah, in the district of Van, plundered the country about Selmast, and cut to pieces about one hundred men, women and children, whom he found in the fields : but the prince's Russian garrison at Elbaugh, a place in the vicinity, hearing of the expedition, waylaid the Koords on their return, and utterly destroyed them, cutting their chief literally to pieces, by way of retaliation.

To the west of the districts of Ooroomea and Selmast, lies the wild and mountainous country in which the river Tigris has its sources. This remote region is inhabited by a race of Christians of a singularly savage and ferocious character. They are said to be the remains of the numerous Christian population which inhabited all this part of the country, in the times of the Greek emperors, and who were forced by their Mahomedan enemies to take refuge in these inaccessible regions. I lament much that we could learn so few particulars regarding these remarkable people.

It appears that they now almost entirely consist of four different tribes. The Teearees, which are by far the most important, amount to about ten thousand families ; the Kojumees to one thousand ; the Jiloos, five hundred ; and the Tookabees, three hundred. They all live under the rule of a sort of prelatical chief, whose dignity is hereditary in the family, although the chief himself, being set apart for the church, cannot marry.

There are generally two sons of the family thus dedicated to heaven and the pontificate ; the rest marry to keep up the succes-

sion ; and the eldest son of the eldest brother always succeeds. The family name of the present chief is Marchimoon. He acts both as priest and general, leading the people to church or to war ; and they all pay him implicit obedience. They are of the Nestorian creed, and hate Roman Catholics even more than Mahometans, putting to death, without mercy, all that fall into their hands. Indeed, they behave little less cruelly to any others who unfortunately come in their way.

They keep up a sort of alliance with one Mustapha Khan Hukaroo, a Koordish chief, and make common cause with him in case of danger, he furnishing cavalry, they foot soldiers. They can bring into the field fourteen thousand capital matchlockmen, all of whom are said to be equal to the best rifle-shots as marksmen.

These people live exclusively amongst themselves, admitting no one into their country, which is so strong and impenetrable that none can enter it without their leave. The only method to obtain admission is to write to Marchimoon, who sometimes grants a courteous permission, in which case the stranger is sure of protection and the most devoted attention. If that is withheld, any attempt to enter would inevitably be followed by death.

The country, which is mountainous throughout, is covered with forests, and closely intersected by precipitous ravines. The roads, which are almost impassable to any others than themselves, are, besides, connected together by dangerous passes, and bridges made of one or two pine-trees thrown across deep chasms. These bridges are moveable and always guarded ; so that, when a traveller approaches, he is reconnoitred and hailed, while the bridge is unshipped and left hanging by a rope. If he be a licensed person, the bridge is replaced, and he passes in safety ; if otherwise, they warn him back on pain of death, or perhaps allow him to approach upon the bridge, and then, letting it fall, precipitate him into the gulf below.

The houses of these people are situated on the tops of very steep cliffs, approached by such goat-paths as would defy most other people, and surrounded by thick forests. Neither the king of Persia

nor any of the surrounding chiefs, have ever been able to make the least impression on these people, nor is there any tradition of their having been conquered. On the contrary, no one cares to meddle with them, for there is nothing to be got by it ; and, in case of any one of them being killed, the rest, like a nest of wasps, would be sure to make the aggressor suffer for it. They bring honey, wax, rosin, wool, timber, sheep, cattle, a little grain, and lead from mines in their hills, to the low countries around ; but they only advance to the skirts of their own territories, where they meet with persons in the habit of dealing with them, and never on any account trust themselves within the walls of a city. Such are the few particulars we could pick up concerning this curious race of people.

While we were halting a day at Tushweez, a village at the north-end of the lake, the army of Allah Yar Khan passed through, on its way to join the prince. We knew of its approach, and would gladly have witnessed its array ; but, to our astonishment, and certainly much to the credit of its leaders, this army of fifteen thousand men, a medley of all the southern and Irāk tribes, Bucktiarees, Maufees, Lacs, Lourees, and others of most predatory reputation, passed through this village during the night, not only without plundering or outrage, but without the least noise or tumult ; nor did we afterwards hear of a single thing being missed, though all was exposed as usual. It was an instance of good conduct so unusual, that the inhabitants could hardly believe their good fortune.

This army did not, however, proceed far on its intended way, nor long sustain its character for good order. In passing Tabreez, it appeared to have caught the cholera, and carried it to Selmast, when they assisted the Russian garrison of Elbaugh in destroying the Koordish invaders ; but, frightened at the mortality caused by this disease, the men refused to proceed against the Pashah of Van according to orders, and insisted on being disbanded. On their return, they plundered and totally destroyed a village of Selmast called Dilmaun, carrying off upwards of two hundred captives. The stragglers spread over the country, committing all manner of outrages. Some who had plundered a caravan of asses were caught near

Tabreez, and punished by the governor of that place with the loss of their ears and eyes. Their commander, Allah Yar Khan, dreadfully angry at this, went to the governor and complained bitterly of the affront; but that officer coolly replied, that if Allah Yar Khan himself were caught at the same work, his punishment should be the same; so the general remounted his horse and rode off, vowing vengeance.

Soon after our return to Tabreez, the prince, probably tired of a war in which he found little was to be gained, sent a messenger to the seraskier at Erzeroom, proposing to treat for peace. This being agreed to on the part of that commander, proper persons were appointed on both sides, and a treaty was drawn up, of which the chief articles, were as follow: — The boundaries of the empire to remain as by former treaties; conquests to be mutually restored; Persian pilgrims to Mecca to have the same privileges and protection as those of Turkey; Koordish refugees to be mutually restored; pashas of Erzeroom to be continued for a longer period than heretofore in office. Perhaps this treaty was accelerated by a decided movement of his Persian majesty towards Kermanshah, but whether this was made on purpose to intimidate the Turks, or with intention to seize on the treasures of his late son, Mahomed Allee Meerza, was not exactly known.

A few days afterwards I obtained an order for post-horses, through the kind intervention of Captain Willock, and being charged with government despatches, I left Tabreez on the 29th of August 1822, and proceeded, by the way of Teflis and Odessa, to Vienna and to England.

A P P E N D I X.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

GEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON

CERTAIN PARTS OF PERSIA.

THE following pages contain some geological notices upon those parts of Persia which fell under my own observation. It was my hope to have rendered it more clear and accurate, but circumstances over which I had no control, put this out of my power.

During my travels, I took every opportunity of sending such specimens as I had collected, with papers and catalogues describing the situation of each rock, and the nature of the country in which it was found, to the Geological Society of London. Several of these specimens were injured by the way, and lost the numbers which had been placed upon them ; so that, although upon my return to England, considerable pains were taken to arrange them afresh, it was not possible to restore the whole to their respective places, and some of the most valuable were entirely lost.

In consequence of this accident, and of a press of other business, the Society found it impossible to arrange, in complete order, all the specimens sent from Persia, or to prepare the papers which accompanied them for the press before the publication of this work ; so that this sketch has unfortunately been deprived of the advantage which it would have derived from the scientific knowledge of the Society, had these points been effected.

Under such circumstances, all I have ventured to attempt, is to give a short account of the country through which I passed, and of the relative positions and nature of its rocks, describing them from the specimens, by the assistance of some scientific friends. This may prove interesting to general readers, and serve to give them some idea of the geological formation of the country, while those who wish to make further enquiry, can consult the specimens themselves, which, with the papers and catalogues that refer to them, are to be found in the collection of the Geological Society of London.

Raus-ul-
Hudd.

On the 4th day of July 1821, we arrived off the promontory of Raus-ul-Hudd, commonly called Rasselgate, which forms the south-eastern point of Arabia, and in the language of that country, signifies "the Land's End." From hence, the coast to the north-east, and I believe the south-west also, presents a succession of precipitous, and often over-hanging cliffs. If a sandy beach occurs beneath, it is generally narrow, and of inconsiderable length.

Muscat,
Lat. $23^{\circ} 28'$
Long. $58^{\circ} 48'$

From Raus-ul-Hudd to Muscat, we continued in sight of the coast, the characteristic feature of which is extreme barrenness; not a blade of grass could be discovered, nor any sign either of vegetable or animal life.

The sea-cliffs are backed by a range of mountains, which sometimes retire to a considerable distance inland, and sometimes approach the shore. Their height is very variable; but at Cape Coriatte it cannot be less than 3000 feet.

These mountains vary also in colour. Some are dark brown, streaked with gray, others light brown; both are wild and rugged, but the latter are more frequently indented by ravines than the former, and are more distinctly stratified.

At the cove of Muscat, the rock proved, on examination, to be serpentine, traversed by veins or strings of calcareous spar. Asbestos also is said to occur in it. It breaks into rhomboidal masses, and exhibits a tendency to stratification. Its strata, if such they are, appear to dip northwards at an angle of about 30° . The variety in the colours of this rock, particularly when exposed to the weather, may explain the streaked appearance of the mountains composed of it, and its unequal hardness the ruggedness of their outline.

This serpentine may be traced for a considerable distance to the north-west, but on the south of Muscat is soon lost, and succeeded by a bed of soapy light-coloured slate or shale. Beyond this, there, is on the south-west, a narrow valley, along which I proceeded fourteen miles inland. On one side there extended along the whole of that tract a high ridge or cliff of limestone, the colour of which is very variable, gray, red, yellow-brown, sometimes distinct, sometimes blended with other tints. The prevailing inclination of the strata is directed to the north-east, at an angle which varies from 30° to 60° , but it is by no means uniform, and in many places convolutions may be seen like those which the layers of wood affect, when turned by knots out of their regular course.

On the other side the hills are lower, and the strata more continuous and horizontal; they consist of limestone and clay intermixed, as in what are called kunker-banks in India. These strata often dip in a contrary direction to those on the opposite bank. At the bottom of the valley are found agglutinated pieces of limestone and serpentine; the latter may be derived from a range composed of this rock, which is found in the neighbourhood. Neither on the high ground, nor in the valley, is there, in general, the least appearance of soil or of vegetation. The surface is in most places cracked, as if it had been exposed to the action of heat.

Such was the country near Muscat, which fell under my observation; and the description I have given, would, I think, apply to the whole district. There are several springs, both warm and cold, and the places where they break out are generally indicated by a village, and a few date trees. These springs are not met with as you advance into the interior of the country. The temperature of one was found to be $111\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ of Fahrenheit. The water was perfectly sweet, and used both for drinking and irrigation; it took its rise in a cave of red limestone. Sparry iron ore is found in the limestone. The relative position of the limestone and serpentine could not be determined.

From Muscat, we crossed the Persian gulf, and having doubled Cape Jask came in sight of an insulated mountain, known to mariners by the name of Bombareek rock, and called by the natives Koh-e-Mubaruc, or the Fortunate Hill. It appears to consist of limestone, similar to that of Muscat. From the unequal hardness of the several beds of this rock, it exhibits a series of alternately projecting and retiring strata, resembling those formed by the basaltic and amygdaloidal beds in the

Jam Ghat, the Boar Ghat, and other lofty mountains which separate the Concan and lower lands of India from the Deccan. These faces of stratified limestone are seen for a considerable way along the coast.

Coins or
Quoins.

The Coins or Quoins, which are rocks that rise boldly from the sea, nearly at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, in appearance and structure resemble Bombareek.

Kishmee.

The island of Kishmee is from eighty to ninety miles in length ; I only saw the north-eastern extremity. In this part are cliffs of limestone from 60 to 200 feet high, capped with coralline sandstone, which is sonorous, and yields with difficulty to the stroke of the hammer. The sand thus agglutinated, forms layers, ridges, and blocks. Beneath it are beds of white, gray, and yellow marl, divided into pillars, or worn into caverns ; and a few feet beneath, a calcareous bed resembling the Kunker of India, and containing, in some parts, numerous shells of oysters, clam, &c., and a great quantity of coral.

No part of the island is much elevated ; the highest hills, which are in the interior, are said to be composed of the same strata as occur on the coast, and are covered with brown sand, like that of Muscat. The gravel and sand agglutinate readily on the application of moisture, a property which the builders turn to advantage. The sand near the shore is whiter, being made up of the detritus of shells and corals.

Gomberoön.

The stones which lay about the old settlement of Gomberoön, were limestone, resembling that of Ormuz, whence perhaps they had been imported ; in the buildings were great quantities of corals and fossil shells. I did not visit the hills inland.

Ormuz.

The island of Ormuz presents a singular assemblage of peaks and ridges ; it is about thirty miles in circumference, but the only part which is level and habitable is a promontory at the northern extremity of about two miles long, three miles across at its broadest part, and terminated by a sandy spit, on which the Portuguese of old erected a fort. The rock most prevalent is of a dark brown or reddish colour, produced by iron ; specular iron ore and ochre abound. Peaks of gypsum as white as snow occur in the island. The heat of the climate is intolerable, not a tree nor plant of any description grows there, nor is there any spring or well of fresh water. Several springs and ponds afford a strong brine, and deposit salt on their margins ; but no rock of salt has been discovered. Below the hills are pieces of conglomerate, probably derived from the higher ground, in which quartz and felspar are imbedded

in a base of light gray horn-stone. There are also found in the state of pebbles, greenish chert, plasma, dark-colored slate clay, brownish or reddish flint, with particles of micaceous iron ore, a dark cellular stone, with fragments of shells and chert, or quartz coated with a saline efflorescence. Copper pyrites, crystallized in pentagonal dodecahedrons occurs abundantly in every part of the island.

The hills rise from the plain very abruptly, and the connecting ridges are narrow and rugged. A nearly horizontal line may be traced along the crest of the high ground, denoting a change of substance. Above this line, the rocks are of a dark brown color, and rise into peaks or needles; all the ravines and slips are at a lower level. The detritus in the valleys readily agglutinates, notwithstanding the apparent paucity of calcareous matter.

The island of Larrak, which is equidistant from those of Ormuz Larrak. and Kishmee, is said to consist of nearly the same substances; ferruginous rocks, iron ores, and gypsum, with brine springs. On the north and north-east it contains limestone.

Anjar island is of a similar description; iron-stone, and ore, have Anjar been found in the bed of a torrent near its centre. Specular ore has also been found on the island of Polior.

All the other islands of the Persian Gulf, as far as information has been obtained, consist of the same rocks as occur at Kishmee and Bombareek rock. The appearance of the horizontal strata seen between Kishmee and Bushire, lead to the same opinion with regard to the northern line of coast. At Barnhill, situated on the coast, and rising Barnhill. to a height of perhaps three thousand feet, and at Cape Verdistan, the rocks are distinctly stratified. From thence to Bushire the hills are all calcareous. Besides beautiful alabaster, and other varieties of gypsum, they produce calcareous spar which is used in making the finer sorts of cement.

The upper end of the Persian Gulf is very shallow. At Bushire Bushire,
Lat. 28° 59'
30". Long.
50° 50' there are not above four or five fathoms of water, even at a considerable distance from the shore. The peninsula on which the town stands is alluvial, consisting of sand and mud, often saline; the sands often rise into dunes. The bed nearest the surface is calcareous freestone, or grit abounding in shells; beneath it are two other varieties of shelly limestone. Large masses of alabaster are found in the hills, brought down or exposed by winter torrents.

Great lime
formation.

From all the information I have been able to collect, and all the observations within my own power, I am induced to believe that the chief part, if not the whole of the Persian Gulf, lies in a great calcareous formation, which, on the one side, extends from below Raus-ul-Hudd, as far as Raus-ul-Kyma within the gulf; and on the other, from some point in Meckran, probably up to Bussora. There is not, as far as I know, any authentic data determining how far this formation extends inland on either side; and its limits along either shore beyond the points mentioned, are equally uncertain. But though I can only speak from experience, in one direction, I am inclined to believe that the portion of country it occupies on the Persian side is very considerable, and that from Candahar on the east, to Kermanshah on the north-west inclusive, the greater part of the mountains consist of calcareous matter.

Bushire to
Shiraz.

However this may be, the known extent of this formation is very great, and our land journey from Bushire commenced within it.

On leaving that town, a bed of marl is found, with sand in various degrees of admixture, and chrystallized sulphat of lime is plentifully scattered over the surface; this, from its resemblance to white candy-sugar, is called by the natives Nobat, the Persian name for that substance. As we approached the base of the hills limestone gravel was abundant.

General face
of the coun-
try in Persia.

That part of Persia through which, after having ascended the hills about forty miles from Bushire, we were now to travel, is a plateau, above the level of which various ranges of hills and mountains rise, and divide it into numerous plains of very different dimensions. The general height of the great plain may be from three to four thousand feet above the sea, and the mountains, with their included smaller plains, rise above it to various heights; but in the whole extent, from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, the most elevated ridges do not, except in a few instances, as the peaks of Demawund and Elwund, rise to more than three or four thousand feet above the general level already mentioned. From such information as I have been able to collect, it would appear probable, that, from the range of hills which separate Koordistan from the vallies of the Tigris and Euphrates on the west, to Seistan and even to Candahar on the east, the nature of the country varies but little from that more immediately under consideration; and it perhaps may be inferred, that the elevation of its parts bears a similar analogy to each other.

We ascended the mountains which separate the more elevated country from the plain below, at the village of Dalakee, by a succession of steep and very difficult passes. At the top of each there is a plain, which forms, as it were, a step in the great staircase, leading to the plateau of Persia. We may be said to enter this at the plain of Kanzeroon, although, between that place and Sheeraz, a chain of mountains intervenes, of at least six to seven thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Passes to
the upper
country.

The whole mountainous tract between Dalakee and Shiraz, although appearances may occasionally vary, exhibits no variation in geological character. It consists of limestone, chiefly compact and splintery, of a yellow or grey colour, and gypsum; and the hills assume a stratified form, the strata most generally dipping to the northward and north-eastward; at various angles from 15° to 45° . They were, however, often so disturbed, that the minutest observation could not detect the original or natural direction. The sulphates were so mingled with the carbonates, that it was impossible to determine their relative positions. Sometimes whole hills of gypsum occurred, interspersed with small blocks and pieces of limestone; in other instances, the limestone might be seen pervaded with small veins and masses of gypsum. Sulphuric acid is found in some places in a disengaged state, strongly impregnating certain earthy substances, which impart it to water. Salt, too, occurs in large quantities in this district, for most of the streams are more or less saline; and there are several salt lakes, particularly one at Shiraz, and another at Kauzeran, both of which, being dried by evaporation every year, leave much salt behind. We heard also of a salt mine not far from Dalakee, but found not the smallest stone that was not calcareous until we reached Shiraz, where, at the foot of the southern range of hills bounding the valley, and in the course of such streams as come from a distance, pieces of chalcedony are, we understand, occasionally picked up.

Shiraz,
Lat. $29^{\circ} 37'$
 $50''$, Long.
 $52^{\circ} 40' 22''$.

From Shiraz to Ispahan, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, the road led over a very elevated tract, crossing the eastern end of the Buchtiaree mountains; but the rise was gradual, and the vallies, which separate the hills, were on a much higher level than the general face of the country. The nature of the rocks was very similar to that of those before described; the strata, always distinct, generally dipped to the north, but not in every case; for it sometimes happened that the opposite sides of a valley exhibited the strata dipping *to*, or *from* each

Shiraz to
Ispahan.

other. In some cases they were horizontal and straight, in others curved, waved, or twisted; but they were always parallel to each other.

In this district, gypsum does not occur so copiously, and the limestone differs somewhat in consistence from that nearer the coast. Until we reached a point between Dehgerdoo and Yezdekhaust, almost at our greatest elevation, it was chiefly compact and splintery, of a yellow, light grey, or dark smoky grey colour, perfectly resembling the mountain limestone of England, and sometimes pervaded with nodules of chert. At this point there were indications of a more primitive formation penetrating to the surface; we had descended a little, and entered a tract of low alluvial hills, cut into distinct masses by the action of torrents; these knolls were composed of slatey clay rock, in a state of decomposition, and from among them, in several places, masses of quartz rock were observed protruding from the surface.

Between
Dehgerdoo
and Yezdikhaust.

Near this place were also seen large strata of conglomerates, consisting of multitudes of rounded pebbles, united by a calcareous cement, alternately with a sandstone very firmly agglutinated. The pebbles in the first consisted of quartz, green serpentine, and limestone. These conglomerates filled up much of the space between the ranges of hills, and were found in great abundance in many parts of the plains of Yezdikhaust; but the hills themselves on both sides consisted of black or dark grey compact splintery limestone, veined with white. The immense plain of Yezdikhaust, like most of the great plains of Persia, consists chiefly of gravel; it is perfectly level, and exhibits many proofs of having once been covered with water.

Leaving the plain of Yezdikhaust, we again found compact grey mountain limestone, veined with white. Near Ispahan, a low range of clay slate hills intervene, but the calcareous rocks soon recommenced.

Ispahan,
Lat. $32^{\circ} 39' 34''$, Long.
 $51^{\circ} 44' 37''$
From Ispahan to Tehran.

Proceeding almost due north from Ispahan towards Tehran, we seemed to leave the calcareous formation, and passed over an elevated chain of hills, which, both in appearance and composition, assumed the character of primitive mountains.

The first circumstance which attracted our attention was a change in the colour of the hills. This occurred near the village of Moorchacor, in passing a small branch of the great range which separates the plains of Ispahan and Cashan. These hills exhibited strata disposed much in the same direction as those behind, of ash-grey, yellowish red, brown

or blackish red; the two last were composed of granular quartz, and bore evidence to the presence of iron.

The upper and some of the under strata of these first hills seem to be entirely calcareous, the siliceous rocks taking a middle position, though the strata all dip at the same angle. The union between the two substances is so intimate, that it is extremely difficult to distinguish where the one begins and the other ends. The red, yellow, and brown strata were seen, both in this and the subsequent march, running north-west and south-east among the hills, as far as the eye could reach. Hills near Moorhacor.

About twenty miles further in our progress over this range of mountains, clay-slate was observed, surmounted by granular limestone. These were traversed by a substance which we took to be trap, and which ran across the country in very remarkable strata, like dykes, taking the same direction as the clay-slate and other substances, and dipping chiefly northwards.

As we advanced, the rocks changed still more. The schistose formation met with the day before became more plentiful; earthy and rounded knolls of alluvium, much weather-worn, occupied the space between the loftier peaks, and the dyke-like strata were frequently observed penetrating through their surfaces, and traceable in lengthened lines from one to another. Hills of Cohrood.

The rocky ridges bore a very different character. They always showed a craggy crest, with a gravelly slope below it to the southward; while the other side was less abrupt, with a thin covering of earth or pebbles. The highest parts were of compact dark-grey limestone, but the lower ridges were composed of very curious conglomerates, some being calcareous, containing nummulites, and having white crystals in veins dispersed through a cement of yellow or brown sand; others, again, inclosing compact agate-like kernels of a brown hue, in a cement variously coloured. These aggregates, when broken across, resembled variegated marbles. Below these were clay-slate and porphyry in a state of rapid decomposition. One very curious specimen was picked up; in breaking a piece of compact limestone rock, containing nummulites, an echinus of nearly seven inches in diameter was found, converted into chalcedony. This specimen, among others, was presented to the Geological Society. Granite and clay-porphyry occurred in detached blocks and beds; but it was impossible to determine their respective portions.

As we ascended we found masses of granite, coarse-grained granu-

lar quartz, quartz with chlorite, mica-slate, and trap-porphyry; in some of these, quartz was most abundant, in others, mica.

The loftiest part of the ascent was covered with snow, it being late in November; but, descending, we soon observed numerous masses of granite, and white selenite scattered about; and, as we approached the village of Cohrood, we found the lower parts of the mountains entirely composed of these substances, while the rocks on their summits were of a dark iron-stained compact rock, very shivery, and affecting a rhomboidal fracture, which, probably, was felspar-porphyry, coloured with iron. Masses of a dark trap-porphyry lay scattered about, but we could not discover from whence they were derived.

In descending from Cohrood we found the granite and felspar-porphyry still keeping their respective situations; the latter sometimes passing into clay-slate, sometimes into quartz-rock. Masses of trap-porphyry frequently occurred amongst the granite. Veins or strata of light-coloured clay porphyry were occasionally seen traversing both the granite and felspar-porphyry in a direction opposite to that of their strata. Grey granular limestone also occupied a portion of the mountain tops. In one place only, we found a remarkable reddish rock, pervaded with veins of calcareous spar, protruding itself above the soil, in a field not very far above the stream in the bottom of the valley.

From Cashan, at the foot of the lofty range just described, the road turning to the westward passes along the foot of a lower branch of hills which differ from it materially in formation and substance. They were formed of earth, red, yellow, brown and grey, in irregular patches, very ridgy, and much furrowed by weather. But little rock was to be seen, and that little, fast mouldering into soil. Certain rounded masses near the road consisted of a yellow rock, apparently siliceous, rapidly decomposing. The red, was dark-red, laminated, micaceous sand-stone; the grey resembled the last, but its fracture was more compact. The gravelly ground about the feet of these hills was composed of pebbles from the loftier range, among which trap-porphyry with white spots was abundant.

Our route to Koom for about thirty-six miles lay along the feet of these hills. From Koom, we crossed a plain of fifteen miles, gravelly near the hills on either side, and clayey in the middle; it skirts a considerable tract of salt desert, which stretches eastward, sometimes marshy, but at this season nearly dry.

A low range of hills occurs in this place similar in their nature to

From Cashan
to Koom.

From Koom
to Tehran,
Lat. $35^{\circ} 40''$
Long.
 $51^{\circ} 22' 50''$.

those between Cashan and Koom, but they contained much dark compact felspar, and a quantity of amygdaloid, with phrase in green-coated kernels of great beauty.

A low, sandy, desert tract intervenes between these and another range of hills, which, seen from a little distance, appear to be similar to those last described; but night closed in before we reached them, so that I can say nothing positive either of them, or of a third small range which occurs about twenty miles before reaching Tehran. There can, however, be little doubt, that these and some other rocky ranges which rise like islands in the great plain intervening between the Cohrood and the Elburz mountains, are essentially similar to those already described, and to one another.

The mountains, to which I venture to give the general name of Elburz, form a very extensive range, which, on the west, are connected with the great chain of Caucasus. They may be considered as commencing in the plains of Mogham at the mouth of the rivers Koor and Araxes, from whence they take a south-eastern direction for about four degrees of longitude to a point somewhat east of Tehran. Here they assume a course rather to the north of east, till about the sixty-second degree of east longitude they join, or become identified with the range of hills, denominated by Mr. Elphinstone, in his account of Caubul, the Paropamisan range, and thus connect the mountains of Hindoo Coosh, Himalah, and the great central knot of Asia, with those of Caucasus.

The Elburz mountains, defined.

This extensive chain divides the provinces of Azerbaijan, Irak, and the southern part of Persian Khorasan, from Gheelan, Mazunderan, and the desert Steppes to the eastward of the Caspian Sea, and forms a sort of terrace wall, which supports the plateau of Upper Persia on the north, and separates it from the low country upon the banks of the Caspian. It sends off many branches to the southward, which run in various directions, and become connected with the mountains in the interior of Persia. Some of these branches are lost in the salt or sandy deserts, or rise above their surface, here and there, in solitary rocks.

While resident at Tehran, I had only opportunities of examining the torrent beds, and gravel at the foot of these mountains; among the pebbles of which, varieties of porphyry, frequently coloured with chlorite and compact felspar, with green earth, chiefly abounded; granites and mountain limestone also were, but more rarely, to be seen.

The great road between Tehran and Mushed, the capital of Kho-

rasan, runs chiefly along the southern base of this range, occasionally crossing the branches which detach themselves from it.

During the first two days' march from Tehran, we passed over the gravelly slope which extends from the feet of the mountains, until it is met by loamy or clayey soil, or is bounded by the salt desert. This gravel exhibited several varieties of porphyry and granite, coloured with chlorite.

Pass of Sir-
dara.

In the third day's march we passed a defile of four or five miles in length, in which limestone and gypsum abound, intermixed with glittering pieces of selenite. We observed, also, a dark grey rock, with light coloured stripes, sometimes running in straight lines, sometimes in curves more or less concentric, like knots in a piece of wood. Selenite was abundantly dispersed in large beds of red marl, amongst which also were found specimens of rock salt. The stream which flowed through the pass was salt, and covered the ground about with saline efflorescence. Red sandstone in strata with the marl, and white granular gypsum in detached masses also occurred.

The hills nearest the plain, as we approached this pass, were composed of clay, deeply furrowed by the torrents, and exhibiting great variety of colour, like those near Cashan. No rock was exposed to view in these hills; but in those at a distance, I observed stratification, of a very irregular description.

From this pass the road led us for thirty or forty miles over a gravelly plain, and then crossed a tract of soil several miles in extent, formed probably of detritus from the mountains. In this the torrents had cut furrows fully a hundred feet in depth, and so narrow, that an active man might bound across in many places. These gave a view of many alternate layers of gravel and clayey or calcareous beds; probably a considerable part was composed of marl; for in passing a small promontory of hills just beyond this bed, they were found to consist of red and white marl, red sandstone, white gypsum, and compact limestone.

Semnoon,
Lat.
35° 33' 30".
Long.
53° 25' 18"
Gurdunee
Aheaiyoon,
near Sem-
noon.

A few miles beyond Semnoon, which is a town of about one hundred and twenty miles east of Tehran, the road crosses another branch, that detaches itself from the Elburz, by a pass called Gurdunee Aheaiyoon. The rocks which predominated here were various coloured limestones; greenstone in large amorphous masses, and large beds of sandstone and gravel.

Between the Aheaiyoon Pass and Shahrood, a distance of eighty or

ninety miles, the gravelly plains over which we travelled presented us with pebbles of red and white sandstones, and several varieties of limestones. The hills about Shahrood, which form the lower part of the Elburz range, consisted of the same substances, particularly of the last. It should be mentioned, that a salt desert runs along upon the south side of the road, at various distances, all the way from Tehran to Shahrood, and that salt is very abundant in the soil, and in the hills to the north.

Shahrood,
Lat.
36° 25' 20"
Long.
55° 2' 23".

After leaving Shahrood the road traverses a plain for about thirty miles, and then winds through a long tract of low hills, which extend from the village of Meyomeid to that of Abbassabad, about eighty miles east from Shahrood. The greater part of these are formed of gravel, containing granite, greenstone, porphyry, limestone, and sandstone, in several varieties.

Abbassabad,
Lat.
36° 25' 50".
Long.
56° 30' 34".

A considerable tract of low ridgy hills, behind Abbassabad, are composed of a brown, laminated sandstone, readily decomposing, but almost as readily reuniting into a second rock. In the gravelly plain below, which borders on the salt desert, greenstone, or chlorite slate and sandstone, was abundant.

From Muzeenoon, twenty-five miles east of Abbassabad, and about three hundred and twenty from Tehran, to Subzawar, a distance of between sixty and seventy miles, the road traverses a gravelly plain, interspersed with spots of rich clayey soil; sandstone and greenstone, with a species of trap, in large blocks, were most common there.

For forty miles after leaving Subzawar, the road skirts along the hills upon a gravelly slope, and then crosses the end of a branch originating in the Elburz. A yellow splintery lime-stone occupied the lower part of this pass; serpentine, occasionally schistose, in great abundance, succeeded this, and quartz and felspar were found in the higher parts of the pass.

Subzawar,
Lat.
36° 12' 45".
Long.
57° 40' 37".

About forty miles westward of Nishapore are situated the celebrated Turquoise mines, which have, from time immemorial, exclusively supplied the world with the real gem of that name.

Turquoise
mines near
Nishapore.

After passing through a gravelly country for about twenty-five or thirty miles, the road descends into the bed of a mountain stream, which it follows for a considerable way. It then strikes into a narrower glen, which, gradually ascending among the hills, leads to a hollow at the foot of one higher than the rest; upon eminences in this hollow

Road to
them.

Villages of
Madan.

are situated two villages called Madan, which are inhabited by the miners.

Nature of
the glen.

The glen which leads to the villages is bounded for several miles by hillocks of grey, red, yellow, brown, or white porphyritic earth, having some veins of a bright red colour, like that of red chalk. Those on the right hand are entirely bare; those on the left are grassy. Beds of limestone or porphyritic conglomerates, occurred abundantly among these hillocks, frequently lying like caps upon their summits.

These conglomerates vary in their texture and solidity, sometimes containing large and small, sometimes only innumerable small porphyritic and sandstone pebbles, like those most commonly met with in our route from Tehran. Clay-porphyry, either decomposed or in a solid state, was generally found under these conglomerates. Porphyritic rocks of various colour and texture, grey, with white spots, liver colour, with dark or lighter spots, or green; and limestones in as great variety, were found in great abundance, chiefly in large blocks or pebbles, in the valley.

The soil of the hillocks, and valley in which the villages are situated, appeared to consist of a mixture of clayey, or porphyritic, and calcareous earth.

Number and
names of the
Turquoise
mines.

The Turquoise mines lie at a considerable height above the villages, in the body of the principal hill of the range; there have, as yet, been no Turquoises discovered in the other hills, although apparently of the same nature in form and substance, as this.

The mines are six in number, namely,

- 1st. The Khooroosh mine.
- 2d. The Madan-e-Siah, or black mine.
- 3d. The Aubee mine.
- 4th. The Cummeree mine.
- 5th. The Abdool Rezākec mine.
- 6th. The Kaur-e-Suffeed, or white cavern.

Khooroosh
mine.

The Khooroosh mine makes no great appearance, nor does it afford fine specimens of the gem.

A bed of light grey porphyritic earth upon the side of the hill is worked into pits, and turned over and over by the miners, for the chance of finding some pieces of the gem attached to fragments of porphyritic rock which lie abundantly beneath; the place looks like an exhausted mine, but there is no considerable excavation to account for so much rubbish.

A little above this, round a shoulder of the hill, we found a great quantity of dark brown stones, which had been thrown out from a considerable excavation, made under an overhanging rock of the same nature; this was called the Madan-e-siah, or Black mine. On looking round we found the stones, and all the rock above, full of the blue matter of the turquoise running in little veins in all directions, but chiefly between the lamina and among the crevices. The rock was entirely porphyritic, deeply tinged with iron. We found several small pieces of the gem sticking to fragments of the stone, and occasionally observed the turquoise matter, budding, as it were, from the surface of detached pieces in the form of round pimples of the finest blue. Pebbles, loose or in conglomerates, filled up the larger crevices, and occupied spaces between the strata of the solid rock; these pebbles were of the same nature as the conglomerates described above, and small fragments of the gem were often found attached to them.

Madan-e-Siah, or Black mine.

The next set of excavations, which are of great extent, in a rock exactly similar, at no great distance, are called the Aubee mine. They are no longer worked, though it is difficult to account for the neglect, for the rock appears to be quite as much pervaded with turquoise matter as that of the last mentioned mine. Part of these excavations were covered with a white saline efflorescence, which the natives assured me was alum, but of which we could procure no specimens. Several patches of a fine verdigrease green upon the roof, seemed to indicate the presence of copper, but there was no getting at any part of the stained rock. The natives attributed this also to alum, and declared they never had heard of copper in the neighbourhood; but their ignorance on these subjects is extreme.

Aubee mine.

From this place we descended to the Cummercee mines. Part of these are only pits dug in grey earth, like that of the Khooroosh mine; but the greater quantity of stones is obtained from two deep excavations in a solid dark brown rock, entirely resembling that of the two last mines, viz. clay porphyry strongly tinged with iron, through which the turquoise matter is curiously dispersed in numerous small veins. Water had stopt the working in one pit, but although the rapid slope of the hill on which it had been dug, afforded the easiest means of drainage, the miners had not attempted to relieve it.

Cummercee mines.

We now ascended considerably to a dell near the summit of the hill, in which is situated the chief mine, called, perhaps from its first discoverer, Abdool Rezakee. The principal excavation was under a

Abdool Rezakee mine.

rock, in many respects similar to that of the other mines, but exhibiting a greater variety in colour and substance. Clay porphyry was most abundant, both compact and hard, and in a state of decomposition. There was much of a yellow ochreous clay in which the turquoise matter was plentifully found, though generally in a very imperfect state; micaceous iron ore occurred in veins or masses, particularly amongst the harder parts of the rock, and all the stones were deeply tinged with various shades of iron. Fragments of jasper were also picked up, having pieces of the gem attached to them.

This mine affords the finest and largest specimens of the turquoise, and the crude matter of that gem appears very plentifully dispersed throughout the rocks and earths in which it has been excavated: this sometimes occurs in considerable masses of a pale drossy substance, either soft and pulverulent, or hard and compact; sometimes in the same sort of veins that pervade the rocks of the other mines; but the latter form is here less prevalent.

Kaur-e-Suf-
feed mine.

The last mine that remains to be noticed, is the Kaur-e-Suffeed, or White cave, which is now but little worked, although the excavations are very extensive. The rock of this mine is of a very dark iron-tinged porphyry, much pervaded with iron ore.

General na-
ture of the
hill of the
mines.

The observations made in these several mines, as well as in many other parts of the mountain, both near its summit and its base, considered along with the specimens taken at the time, may probably afford a tolerably correct idea of the nature and composition of the range. It appears to consist of a mass of porphyritic rocks, intermingled with beds of clay and conglomerates of the same substances, all strongly tinged with iron, and in many places pervaded with micaceous iron ore. The turquoise, or calaite of Professor Fisher, is disseminated through this in veins, nodules, and irregular masses. Such seems to be the opinion of the scientific men with whom I have had opportunities of consulting on the subject; but as a very complete series of specimens has been presented to the Geological Society of London, with a catalogue describing their respective positions in the mountain, those who are curious on the subject can have an opportunity of more thoroughly examining them, and I have little doubt that, by these means, much additional light may be thrown on the subject.

Property of
the mines.

The mines are all the property of the crown, and are farmed to the highest bidder. The rent demanded for the year in which I visited them, was 2000 tomauns of Khorasan, equal to about 2700l. sterling;

but this being considered exorbitant, the Abdool-Rezakee mine, and some others, continued unlet. They are all worked without either skill or judgment, but, with a little more of these, might be rendered by far more productive than they are.

From Nishapore, we travelled twenty-five miles over a gravelly slope, to the village of Derrood, at which place the road crosses that branch of the Elburz which separates the plains of Nishapore from that of Mushed, by a very steep and difficult pass.

Nishapore,
Lat.
36° 12' 20".
Long.
58° 49' 27".

The first rock met with in this pass was an ash-coloured shale, which readily decomposes, giving a grey colour to the lower hills. The next was a quartzose rock, which was succeeded by mountain limestone, varying in colour from grey to black, or yellow, and veined with white: this rock is common in many other parts of the country.

Chlorite slate, and quartz, both in large white masses and veins, or mixed with chlorite, then appeared, and of these substances, in different shapes, the whole summit of the mountain was composed. The chlorite slate varied in its colour from dark grey to a slaty purple, or blue black; it was generally laminated, where exposed to the air, but often occurred in compact masses. Its surface was often stained brown or yellow, and sometimes glittered in the sun, but exhibited no mica. Irregular stratification might be detected, but the direction could not be traced. Quartz every where occurred, in blocks, and extensive veins.

After descending ten or twelve miles on the north side of the mountain, during which we saw only the rocks last described, coarse granite, including calcareous particles, appeared in large detached blocks; this was succeeded by coarse-grained granite in great masses, which, after a further descent, gave way to large beds of common granite, often exhibiting columnar divisions; of this it is most probable that all the lower hills of this range, upon the north-east side, are entirely composed.

The mountain, over which this pass led, could not be less than three thousand feet above the level of the plain, and between six and seven thousand above that of the sea, so that it may be considered as a fair sample of the principal mountains in the quarter connected with the Elburz range. If I might venture, on the strength of my own observations, to generalize their geological arrangement, I should say, that, on the southern side, calcareous substances compose their skirts; schistose rocks, clay mixed with quartz, occupies the centre and higher

regions, and granite the greater part of their northern face and lower parts; an arrangement very similar to that observed in the lofty range that occurs between Ispahan and Cashan, commonly called the mountains of Cohrood.

Mushed,
Lat.
36° 17' 40".
Long.
52° 35' 29".

We proceeded no further east than Mushed, which city is not more than twelve or fourteen miles distant from the foot of the pass above described. On the 11th of March 1822, we commenced our journey homewards, taking a more northerly route, and passing between other ranges of the Elburz mountains to Astrabad, a city at the south-east corner of the Caspian.

Elburz
mountains,
between
Mushed and
Astrabad.

The Elburz mountains between Tehran and Mushed, diverge into branches that slant to the south-east, and the vallies which lie between these branches extend deep into the main chain. Subzawar, Nishapore, and Mushed, each respectively occupy a position in one of these vallies, and our road lay in the last of these, which is of great length.

At Sheer-
wan, in Kho-
rasan.

The hills which bound this valley, appear to be similar in nature and formation to those already described; but, in consequence of their remoteness from the road, we could get no specimens. When we had nearly reached Sheerwan, about 140 miles W. N. W. of Mushed, and near the head of the valley, our attention was arrested by a small ridge of hills of singular formation, which struck off from the south-western side of the valley, in a direction nearly north. They were perfectly bare of vegetation, and consisted chiefly of red and white compact limestone, with breccia, containing fragments of the same, in a calcareous cement, lying occasionally between the strata.

These strata dipped to the north and north-east, at an angle of from 30° to 40°, presenting abrupt precipitous faces in the opposite direction; and as the slope of the hill was in some places more gentle than the dip of the strata, the edges of these appeared penetrating through it in a waving line that followed the irregularities of the surface. In other places the whole north-eastern slope consisted of a single stratum, presenting a smooth surface of stone, except where it had been split and shivered by the effects of time and weather. The fracture was irregular, but most frequently affected a square form.

We soon entered a hilly district of gravel and rocks, entirely resembling those just described, in substance, and often in formation. This continued for fifty or sixty miles, in a direction something to the south of west; after which we descended to the low country bordering on the Caspian Sea, by a very intricate pass of about ninety miles in

length. We traversed this long defile, partly in the night, and the whole way under circumstances of too much danger to admit of our taking specimens; indeed, the lower parts were so thickly covered with forest and vegetation, that their structure could not be distinguished. The only specimens obtained were of hard compact limestone.

The last mentioned obstacles prevented any regular observations on the formation of the mountains, the whole way from the foot of the pass by which we entered the low country, proceeding along the shores of the Caspian sea, till we reached Resht, the capital of Gheelan. Hardly a rock was to be seen; all but the highest summits of the mountains was covered by verdure, and these were too distant for examination. At three points only, had we an opportunity to see the native rock uncovered; once at Ashruff, sixty miles west of Astrabad, where sandstone was found; a second time at Sarce, thirty-six miles further west, where there was a hill of limestone, breccia and sandstone; and a third time at Lahajan, twenty-five miles from Resht, where the rock was all granite.

Pass down
to Gourgaun.

From Astra-
bad to Resht,
in Gheelan,
Lat.
37° 17' 30".
Long.
49° 42' 53".

The fragments and pebbles, in the beds of torrents, and on the sea-side, were of the same description as those brought down from the mountains by floods on the south of the range; yellow and grey splintery limestone abounded, as well as a dark grey species of the same stone, veined with white, which is to be found in all the plains of Persia. The granitic varieties, chlorites, and conglomerates of all those sorts heretofore observed, occurred frequently in beds or large masses.

After quitting Resht, we coasted the sea for forty or fifty miles, and then ascended the principal range of the Elburz, by the pass of Aghabler, half way between Resht and Ardebeel. The passes from the higher country of Azerbaijan into Gheelan are all very precipitous and abrupt: the mountains rise to the height of seven thousand feet above the level of the Caspian sea; and the whole ascent sometimes does not occupy a greater length of road than ten or twelve miles.

Resht to
Tabreez.

Pass of
Aghabler.

The first stone observed in our ascent was yellow splintery limestone, which was succeeded by another compact limestone. Beyond this there was much of the same dark blue rock observed in crossing the range at Nishapore. Then came a brown porphyritic rock, exposing on fracture dark spar-like substances; it was very destructible, and formed, by decomposition, a large proportion of the soil. An aggregate rock, with calcareous cement, succeeded, and formed, as far as I

could judge, the summits of all the mountains around, even to Ardebeel, a distance of forty miles.

Ardebeel.

The soil around Ardebeel is white and calcareous, from the decomposition of a light-coloured limestone rock. In our way from that town to Tabreez, we pursued a westerly direction, crossing an elevated tract of country connected with the highest mountains in this part of Azerbaijan, as the ranges of Savalan and Sahund. We carried with us, for a few miles, the light calcareous soil, but soon changed limestone rock, for porphyry, probably containing horn-blende, which lay strewed on the surface, and also abounded in the soil below.

The porphyry was succeeded by a dark trap-rock, which occupied the highest ground. It was sometimes light and porous, as if honey-combed by the weather, but more often heavy, solid, and sonorous when struck, and was occasionally covered with a calcareous coating.

As we descended, trap-porphyry became abundant; after which long tracks of gravelly hills occurred, with large beds of rounded pebbles and strata of conglomerate rocks, united by calcareous cement. White compact limestone rock abounds in the vicinity of Tabreez, and with gravelly hills and conglomerates of the same nature, composes the greatest portion of the country in its vicinity.

Tabreez,

Lat.

38° 5' 10".

Long.

47° 17' 40".

Mountains of Sahund.

The mountains of Sahund, forty miles south-east of Tabreez, which cover with their base a space of some hundred miles in circuit, form an interesting object to the geologist, as composing one of the loftiest clusters in this quarter. The general mass of the country about their base, may be said to be conglomerate, often made up of very large pebbles in a calcareous cement, resting upon a base of granite. A ravine, which gives vent to one of the principal streams from this mountain, was full of large blocks of porphyry. Of this substance, sometimes containing crystals of glassy felspar and horn-blende, the summit of the mountains consists. Some of the lower hills intervening between Sahund and Tabreez are covered with blocks and pebbles of a dark blue rock, containing calcareous matter.

Lake of Ooroomia.

I visited part of the north and eastern shores of the extensive lake Ooroomia. The waters of this lake are so intensely salt as to deposit large quantities of that substance upon the shores; it is probably from this circumstance, that, like some other sheets of salt water, it contains no fish.

The country between the lake and Tabreez resembles greatly that to the eastward. In crossing a range of hills from Tushweesh, a village

at its north-eastern corner, to the plain of Morand, distant forty or fifty miles, we found argillaceous sandstone, compact limestone, and limestone containing a great many petrified shells of the genus *peeten*, which are said likewise to abound in many places around the lake. The rocks in his place were so full of them, that when breaking them for specimens, the shells tumbled out.

Country
around the
lake.

Leaving Tabreez, I posted to Teflis too rapidly to take many specimens. After passing the town of Morand, the mountains continued to retain the reddish brown hue they have in most places around Tabreez, and which, no doubt, is owing to iron. Lime was still the most abundant substance found, but blocks of the same porphyry observed at Sahund, particularly that pervaded with felspar and hornblende, also occurred. The hills through which we passed, were chiefly formed of yellowish and reddish limestone, the strata of which were fantastically twisted.

Tabreez to-
wards Teflis.
Morand.

As I advanced, the district of Karabang lay on the right, presenting to view a confused assemblage of rugged black peaks, composed, as I was informed by a gentleman who had visited the country, entirely of granite.

In the neighbourhood of Nackshevan, blue compact limestone was abundant, with blocks of red porphyry; extensive tracts of gravelly hills occurred, interspersed with cultivatable patches.

Nackshe-
van.

As we passed the huge mountain Ararat, between which and our road a large plain intervened, we crossed large beds of gravel, and hills composed almost entirely of rounded pebbles and large masses of trap and porphyry. The country about Erivan, including most of the heights of Aberan, nearly to the village of Humamloo, on the Russian frontiers, was principally formed of the same substances, and trap-porphyry.

Ararat.

On descending into the valley of Humamloo calcareous rocks prevailed. Trap-rock was plentifully found in the country forty or fifty miles further on the road to Teflis. I travelled the latter part of the road too rapidly to admit of further observations.

No. II.

CONTAINING

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE COMMERCE OF PERSIA.

AMONG the objects which occupied my attention during my stay in Persia, was that of enquiring into the commercial resources of the country, and appreciating, as far as might be in the power of a traveller, its capacity for consuming foreign commodities, and supplying others in exchange. I cannot flatter myself with having succeeded to any great degree in this; because though it was not difficult to learn what were the articles of export and consumption, it was so, in almost every case, to ascertain with any precision the actual amount of demand or supply; and quite impossible, from any procurable data, to estimate what might be looked forward to in future. I presume that such must always be the case at the commencement of a new branch of trade, as any attempt to extend the market for British manufactures in Persia, and the interior parts of Asia, may fairly be considered, and the difficulty is greatly increased when the people with whom it is to be carried on, possess neither records to refer to for information as to past transactions, nor a fixed and steady government, under which they may hope to become prosperous and rich, or to which the merchant can look for protection; and indeed when it is impossible to form a probable conjecture as to the population of the countries to be supplied.

I soon discovered that my information was too defective to supply the materials necessary for a full or systematic account of Persian commerce, which it had been my wish to attempt; and this deficiency was increased by the loss of some important memoranda, particularly relating to the Russian trade with Persia, and the silk trade of Gheelan, as well as by the fault of a treacherous memory, to which, in the hurry of continual occupation, or the

weariness and exhaustion of travelling, too much had occasionally been trusted. • Unwilling, however, that the facts which I had collected should be utterly lost, I have endeavoured to reduce them to a set of tables, accompanied with a few needful observations, by reference to which, those who are curious on the subject, may see, at a glance, all that has been done, and future travellers may have their attention directed with better effect to the promotion of this important object. These tables are as follows :—

No. I. Of the chief articles of produce, raw and manufactured, in Persia.

No. II. Of the export commerce of Persia.

No. III. Of the import commerce of Persia.

No. IV. Of the Russian commerce with Persia, and the Oozbeck states.

I have subjoined a few remarks on the present channels of our trade with Persia and the surrounding countries, and endeavoured to point out how some of these might possibly be improved, and the trade itself consequently extended.

At a period like the present, when all parties admit that the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain are the great sources of her wealth and power ; when government, by their wise and liberal policy, and her merchants, with a generous and enterprizing spirit of adventure, are labouring incessantly to increase and extend the channels of her trade, it may be hoped that any effort, however feeble, to point out the means of promoting these objects, will be received with indulgence and attention.

TABLE I.

Of the principal Articles, raw and manufactured, produced in the chief Districts of PERSIA.

Towns or Districts.	Raw produce.	Manufactures.
PROVINCE OF FARS.		
<i>Shiraz</i> is the only manufacturing town of consequence.	Tobacco	Arms
This city was once celebrated for its gold embroideries, but these are now much excelled by those of other places; its damasked steel knives and daggers are still esteemed, and it manufactures a good deal of coarse glass ware; all its manufactures have declined since it ceased to be the capital of the country.	Dried fruits	Cutlery
	Opium	Glassware, coarse
	Grain	Ornamented pen-cases
	Oranges and limes	Silver and gold kal-leeoons
	Lemon-juice	Tobacco-pipes
	Sulphur	Cotton cloths
	Lead	Cotton and woollen stockings
	Red and yellow ochre	Wine
	Lamb-skins	
	Horses, sheep	
PROVINCE OF KERMAN.		
<i>Kerman</i> , the chief town; but most of the surrounding villages manufacture shawls, numuds, and other woollens; the wool will be hereafter taken notice of as being the finest in Persia.	Colour for dying the beard (indigo leaves)	Shawls
The province of Mekran and Bal-loochistan are not taken notice of, as it is believed that they export nothing; they consist for the most part of impracticable desert and barren mountains, which yield no produce, except perhaps a little wool, part of which may be carried to, and manufactured in Kerman.	Colour (hinna) for dying the hands and feet.	Numuds and felted articles
	Dates	Carpets
	Pistachio nuts	Matchlocks
	Anise seed	
	Cotton	
	Wool	
	Lead	
	Sulphur	
	Saltpetre	
YEZD.		
<i>Yezd</i> , the chief town, is a place of great trade being a great entrepot for all commodities that come from India and the countries east of itself. The silk manufactures of this place will be hereafter more particularly described.	None	Silk goods, as
		Kussubs
		Dereys
		Peerahns
		Tafetas
		Handkerchiefs
		Cotton cloths
		Carpets
		Numuds
		Loaf sugar
		Shoes
		Ironware
		Earthenware

TABLE I. — continued.

Towns or Districts.	Raw produce.	Manufactures.
PROVINCE OF IRAK.		
<i>Ispahan</i> , the chief city, and its dependancies. The cotton and silk manufactures of this place will hereafter be noticed more particularly.	Cotton Rice Grain Fruits Manna (Gezunga-been) Red dye Opium Wool	Silk goods Velvets Chintzes Cotton cloths Gold and silver brocades Glassware Paper Carpets Numuds Cutlery, fine Arms Bow and arrows Gold and silver kallicoons Ornamented pen cases Loaf sugar Sweetmeats Shoes and stockings Carpentry
<i>Cashan</i> - - - Its manufactures will hereafter be noticed.	Opium Smalts, called erroneously lapis lazuli	Velvets Silk goods Cotton ditto Gold and silver brocades Copper household utensils Earthenware
<i>Casveen</i> - - -	Vitriol Grain Dried fruits Treacle of grapes Sheep Horses	Cotton cloths Numuds Stockings Swords Arms
PROVINCE OF KHORASAN.		
There are, in this province, a great number of towns and large villages, the exports of which are thus generally given; those more peculiar to some of the principal towns are given opposite their names below.	Cotton Grain Assafœtida Manna Tobacco Turquoises Zeng (allum) Dried fruits Sheep-skins Camels Horses Sheep	Swords Fire arms Stone ware Carpets Numuds Woollen cloths Cotton goods Sheep-skin pelisses

TABLE I. — *continued.*

Towns or Districts.	Raw produce.	Manufactures.
PROVINCE OF KHORASAN — <i>continued.</i>		
<i>Mushed</i> - - -	Turquoises	Velvets, (fine) Sword blades Armour Dishes, water ewers, coffee and tea- pots made of stone
<i>Herat</i> - - -	Dried fruits Pistachio nuts Almonds Saffron Assafoetida	Sword-blades Carpets of silk — of wool
<i>Tubbus</i> - - -	Dates Dried fruits Tobacco	
<i>Toorshex</i> - - -	Gum ammoniac Assafoetida	
<i>Bheerjūn and Caen</i> - -		Numuds Felts Woollen fabrics
<i>Cochoon or Kabooshan</i> -		Sheep-skin pelisses
PROVINCE OF MAZUNDERAN.		
Chief towns, <i>Balfroosh</i> , <i>Saree</i> , <i>Amol</i> , <i>Korumabad</i> ; but the whole country being full of populous villages, which all contribute their produce, none need be particularly mentioned. <i>Balfroosh</i> is the chief mart of commerce.	Silk (in small quantity) Cotton Sugar Rice Hemp Oranges Fish Timber Sheep Horned cattle	Silk goods Woollen ditto
Astrabad, though producing little, may be considered as included in Mazunderan.		
PROVINCE OF GHEELAN.		
<i>Resht</i> , <i>Lahajan</i> , <i>Fomen</i> , <i>Enzellee</i> , are the chief marts of Persian Gheelan, but, like Mazunderan, it is full of large villages, which all contribute their produce. <i>Silk</i> is the staple article.	Silk Rice Oranges Hemp Timber Fish	Silk stuffs Cotton ditto Woollens Cutlery Arms

TABLE I. — *continued.*

Towns or Districts.	Raw produce.	Manufactures.
PROVINCE OF AZERBIJAN.		
<i>Tabreez</i> is the chief town of this large province, but there are many others, as <i>Ardebeel</i> , <i>Maragha</i> , <i>Khoosee</i> , <i>Moraund</i> , <i>Erwan</i> , <i>Naksheetwan</i> , which contribute to its exports, but I am not aware of any remarkable difference in their respective produce or exports.	Grain Cotton Dried fruits Treacle of grapes Honey Wax Wool Hides Fox-skins Iron Marble Salt Saltpetre Horses Camels Sheep	Velvets Silk stuffs Carpets Numuds Woollens Copper utensils Cutlery, (a little) Arms
DISTRICT OF KERMANSIAH.		
This district, with the two following, belong properly to the great province of Irak, but being distinct governments, I have stated them and their productions separately.	Grain Gall nuts Hides Sheep Horses	Carpets
DISTRICT OF HAMADAN.		
The leather of this district is famous over all Persia.	Raisins Treacle of grapes	Prepared leather Saddlery Shoes
DISTRICT OF BOOROOJIRD.		
The carpets of this district are in great estimation.	Dried fruits Treacle of grapes	Carpets of excellent fabric

It will appear by the foregoing table, that there are many articles, as well raw as manufactured, which are common to most provinces; and it is to be understood that there are many fabrics which have no place in it, because they are either entirely consumed at the place of manufacture, or have so little range of export as to be too trifling to mention; thus, much silk and cotton is wrought in every village, for the purposes of its own inha-

bitants, but those only have been mentioned as producing these article, which export them in considerable quantity.

It must also be evident that a great number of the articles inserted in this table, belong entirely to the internal commerce of the country, and could never be made available as returns for foreign goods; but in a table intended to give some idea of the internal resources, as well as the capabilities for external commerce of the Persian empire, it was necessary to give them all a place, and it is believed that no branch of any great importance among the exports has been omitted. It is now proper to add a few explanatory remarks on some of the articles named.

Raw Silk is the most important export staple of Persia; it is produced to more or less extent in every province, but Gheelan and Mazunderan are those in which it chiefly flourishes, and which alone export it in any quantity. The amount annually produced in Persian Gheelan alone, as stated in the narrative (at page 154.) amounts to 60,000 mauns Shahee*, or about 900,000 lbs. English, of which three-tenths are purchased by the Russians, and carried to Astracan, a like quantity is sent to Bagdad and its vicinity, two-tenths are sent to Constantinople, Aleppo, and the other cities of Asia Minor, and the remaining two-tenths go to Ispahan, Yezd, Cashan, and those cities of Persia, celebrated for their silk manufactures. Russian Gheelan, with Sheerwan, and a few of the districts bordering on the Caucasian range, besides several other parts of Persia, are favourable to the production of silk, so that were the demand to increase there is little doubt that the supply would do so likewise. The price of silk varies according to its quality, and at the time I was in Gheelan, might be quoted from 6½ to 8 tomanis (from 3*l.* 12*s.* to 4*l.* 8*s.*) per maun Shahee of about 14 lbs. English; some inferior qualities were to be had as low as 4 tomanis, and a very fine sample would occasionally bring 9 tomanis, or about 5*l.* sterling.

Cotton is also an article of almost universal production over Persia; a great quantity is made in Mazunderan, where its price, at the time I was there did not much exceed 2½*d.* per pound, and its quality was

* Hanway estimates the quantity annually made about the year 1744, to be 30,000 batmans, each batman being equal to about 12 lbs. English; of these, 6000 were worked up, he says, in Persia, 4000 were sent to Bagdad, and the remainder were carried to Astracan. Not many years before, he observes, the Armenians carried 25,000 batmans to Astracan, the greater part of which was sent on to Holland and Germany.

The price paid by the British during the continuation of the Caspian trade, in which he was engaged, was from 12 to 18 crowns, (from 3*l.* to 4*l.* 10*s.*) per batman. The Russians and Armenians afterwards paid from 30 to 40 crowns, (7*l.* 10*s.* to 10*l.*) per batman.

fully equal to that of the more common Bengal cottons. The Russians carry away some, but the greater part is manufactured within the country. There is no doubt that the quantity raised might be infinitely increased, but the bulk of the commodity renders it rather unfit for land carriage.

Wool is produced in great abundance over Persia and the neighbouring countries, a great portion of the inhabitants being of pastoral habits; and there is no doubt that a regular demand would soon increase the quantity of this article to a great extent. The best wool is that of Kerman, the mountains of which, hot and arid in summer, and intensely cold in winter, sustain great flocks of sheep and goats, from whence the shawls, numuds, and other woollen fabrics of the country are made. Not only is the wool of the sheep itself of very fine quality, but the goats produce a down which grows in winter at the roots of the hair, in the same manner as that of the Thibet or shawl goats, and is nearly as fine: this is spun into various fabrics, which almost vie with the celebrated shawls of Cashmere, in warmth and softness, if not in fineness and beauty of manufacture; and I think there is little doubt, that if a sufficient quantity of this down, which the natives call *khoolk*, could be brought to England, it would very greatly improve the texture of our imitation shawls, and render them saleable in the east to a far greater extent than they now are.

This *khoolk* is found, not only in Kerman, but in more or less degree over all Khorasan, and the countries to the eastward; the mountains of which are favourable to the animals which produce it; but I do not believe it is to be had in any great quantity together; the price in Khorasan was between two and three reals per *maun Tabreez* (about 5*d.* a pound), but it was full of the goat's coarse hair and very foul; I understood it was to be had much finer, clearer, and even cheaper, in Kerman.

Rice being a common article of food in Persia, is grown in many places, particularly in Mazunderan and Gheelan, whence it is sent to other parts; but it can never be of use to any foreign nation except the Russians, who sometimes ballast their ships with it to Astracan.

Grain, chiefly wheat, is almost exclusively an article of internal commerce, except that a little is sent from Fars to Muscat, and the other Arabian ports.

Dried fruits, raisins, apricots, plums, dates, with almonds, pistachio nuts, &c. form a considerable branch of export to India, and, perhaps, might answer for European consumption; in which case the supply might be made very abundant.

Opium is, I believe, made only for consumption in the country, nor do

I know if the quality be such as would render it an object for encouragement; it probably resembles the Turkey opium, and no doubt might be produced largely, and though I do not recollect the price, I know it was very moderate.

Tobacco. That of Sheeraz, Tubbuss, and some other places, has acquired great celebrity, and is sent in considerable quantity to India, where it is much esteemed. It forms a considerable article of trade with Bagdad and Turkey.

Sulphur. The great sulphur mines of Khameer, in the Persian Gulf, are rented by the Imaum of Muscat, who works them, and trades with the produce. I am not aware of any other export of this article from Persia, though there are several sulphur mines in the country.

Lead is imported rather than exported, but in no great quantity. The lead mines of Fars and Kerman supply the demand of the country.

Horses are exported to India to a considerable amount, both by sea from Bushire, where they are collected from the breeding districts of the Chab, the Dushtistan, Cauzeroon, Sheeraz, &c., and from Khorasan and the north-eastern districts by land, through Affghanistan and the Punjab. In both ways they serve for mounting our Indian cavalry, and supplying the great private demand that constantly obtains in the three presidencies. Perhaps this trade could not be carried much farther; for when I passed through the country, the price of horses had greatly risen, and the breeding districts were drained.

The other articles of raw produce contained in the Table hardly deserve notice, being trifling in amount, and chiefly of internal consumption. A few furs, as lamb-skins and foxes' skins from Azerbaijan, some wax, gall-nuts, and a little dyeing stuff, might be obtained; but I do not believe the quantity would form any commercial object.

Although few, if any, of the manufactures of Persia can be of much consequence in enumerating the exportable commodities of the country, they deserve attention as pointing out the tastes and necessities of the people, which foreign merchants must endeavour to supply. I therefore will give some description of the principal articles fabricated, which, with few exceptions, are chiefly for home consumption.

Silk Goods. The chief of these are called aleejahs, dereis, cussabs, peerahuns, tafetas, handkerchiefs. The whole of these are made best at Yezd, and those of Ispahan, Cashan, and Tabreez, are next in estimation. The sizes and prices are as follow:—

Aleejahs and *peerahuns* are made in pieces of 2 yards 25 inches long,

by 25 inches wide, and resemble stout lutestrings, but are fully closer in their texture. The wholesale price of those from Yezd was 7 reals (9s. 4d.); those from other quarters about $4\frac{1}{2}$ reals (6s.) per piece. They were dyed either blue or red. The latter were nearly 30 per cent. dearer than the former, on account of the cochineal used in dyeing them. They are both used for men and women's shirts, one piece making a shirt.

Dereis are 3 yards 29 inches long, by 29 inches wide, of similar manufacture to the above, and of different fineness; those of Yezd sell at 10 reals (13s. 4d.) others for 8 reals (10s. 8d.) They are used for *kabbas*, the Persian outer vest.

Cussabs, 7 yards 2 inches long, by 29 inches wide, somewhat stouter than those above mentioned, but similar in fabric, sell at about 22 reals (1l. 9s. 4d.) a piece. They are used for men and women's trowsers.

Tufetas, a fabric similar to, but stouter than the same stuff with us, in size and price is the same as the *aleejahs*.

Velvets of very great beauty are made at Mushed, and in various places, as Ispahan, Cashan, Tabreez.

Satin is also made, but not, I think, of so fine a quality; that from China is much preferred. I do not possess memorandums sufficiently precise to state the prices of these articles.

Handkerchiefs, black, rather less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ yard square, coarse, and twilled like Barcelona handkerchiefs, were manufactured every where, and served for women's head-dresses; sold at $3\frac{1}{2}$ reals (4s. 8d.); if dyed in crimson, at $4\frac{1}{2}$ reals (6s.) each.

Handkerchiefs of very flimsy texture, about yard square, spotted yellow, red, brown, blue, or green, upon grounds of the same colours to match, sell from 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ real (1s. 4d. to 2s.) each. Others of a better texture, spotted or flowered on a black, red, blue, green, or brown ground, with borders to match, $1\frac{3}{4}$ yards square, sold for $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 reals (6s. to 6s. 8d.) A small sort, very coarse and flimsy, checked, red, grey, yellow, green, blue, or white, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a yard square, sold as low as half a real.

The cotton goods chiefly manufactured are chintzes or printed cottons, and culumcars, peerahun shahees, kudduks, kherboz, Ispahan stripes, with a few intermediate varieties.

Chintzes and *Prints* are manufactured in many places, but they are coarse, both in texture and pattern, and are only used for inferior purposes. The printed cottons of India and Europe, particularly the latter, had superseded them so much, that the manufacturers were said to have petitioned the king to prohibit further importations. A protecting duty was talked of;

but if such a measure were even put in practice, a very improbable thing, it would be always and easily eluded. They are largely exported to Russia.

Culumcars are that sort of print, the pattern of which consists of wreathed and consecutive flowers in gay colours, sparsely thrown upon a ground, white, blue, red, fawn colour; they are used for particular purposes, as inner vests, linings of robes, &c., and are often of high price, according to the beauty of the pattern.

Peerahun shahees (or king's shirts) resemble English long-cloth, which has entirely superseded them.

Kudduks are narrow cloths, of a fabric resembling nankeen, of all colours, and of a size suited to make a single kabba*, for which they are entirely used. They cost from 3 to 6 reals (4s. to 8s.), according to fineness. Those of Ispahan are most esteemed, and are largely exported to Russia.

Stripes of Ispahan, another coarse cloth, striped blue, purple, or grey, which cost about $2\frac{1}{2}$ reals (3s. 4d.) a picce, and are taken in great quantities by the Russians.

Kherboz, a coarse white cloth of a loose fabric, varying in quality. It is used by the poorer classes in many articles of clothing, and as lining for the garments of the better sorts. It is made for home-use in every village, and an immense quantity is taken off by the Russians.

The *Woollen Goods* of Persia chiefly consist of carpets, numuds, felted goods, Kerman shawls, and a variety of fabrics of smaller importance, used by the inhabitants as clothing.

Carpets are made in many places. Those of Herat, of Kerman, of Yezd, of Booroojird, of the Toorkomans of Khorasan, of Ispahan, and Azerbijan, are all beautiful, though of different fabric and pattern; and though they are for the most part dear, I think they might answer as an article of trade.

Numuds, or fine felt carpets, are sometimes of great beauty, but they are dear, and apt to get moth-eaten; and never having been introduced in Europe, there is no saying how they might answer; the supply might be very great. The other felted and woollen articles, being merely for internal consumption, need not be mentioned.

There are few other things that require attention. The arms, cutlery, kalleeoons, &c. which form objects of trade among themselves, might doubtless be better supplied by European manufactures. Something of this is

* The Persian upper vest, which sits close to the body, as far down as the the waist, and has long loose skirts.

done already, but in a trifling way, and not lucrative in proportion to the risk. Such branches of trade may, however, increase in time, and by attention. One article may be noticed, as it has acquired some celebrity—the *wine* of Shiraz. This is made in no great quantity, and in so careless a manner, that, in choosing it, not more than one carboy (or large bottle) in four or five can be made use of. There is no such thing as a cask in all Persia; and as the wine is fermented in comparatively small earthen vessels or glass bottles, some idea may be formed of the various and ill-concocted stuff that is too often produced.

TABLE II.

Of the Export Commerce of PERSIA with various Countries.

India.	Turkey.	Baglad.	Oozbecks and Toorkomans.	Arabia and the Gulf
Specie	Grain	Grain	Kerman shawls and	Wheat
Dried fruits	Raw silk	Cotton	woollens	Dates
Tobacco	Tobacco and pipes	Silk	Silk stuffs from Yezd	Dried fruits
Wine	Cotton	Tobacco and pipes	and Ispahan, &c.	Rose-water
Drugs	Lamb-skins	Drugs	Gold embroidery from	Abbas (Arab
Assafoetida (Hing)	Foxes' do.	Dyes	Cashan and Ispahan	cloaks)
Dates	Carpets	Cotton goods	Copper ware, &c. from	
Sulphur	Silk manufactures	Silk do.	Cashan	
Turquoises	Cotton do.	Kerman shawls	Cotton goods	
Raw silk	Kerman shawls	and woollen	Arms	
Carpets	Salt	goods	Leather from Hemadan	
Kerman shawls,	Sheep	Cashmere shawls	Sal ammoniac	
&c.			Dried fruits	
Rose-water	<i>Foreign produce.</i>		Shoes and clothes	
Swords	Cashmere shawls		Turquoises	
Combs	Indian goods		Sugar, raw, refined, and	
Horses	Indigo		candy	
Greyhounds	Coffee		Some Indian goods	
	Sugar		Opium	
<i>Foreign produce.</i>	Bockhara sheep			
Copper	and lamb-skins			
Saffron	Pearls			
Salep				

In the foregoing Table I have not inserted the exports to Russia, because these are contained in a separate table along with the imports; and there is no column for exports to Europe, because in whatever manner European imports are paid for, or whatever quantity of Persian produce may reach Europe, it is not sent direct, but appears, among the exports to other places, as Astra-

can, Turkey, Teflis, &c. The exports to Teflis are also to be considered as included among those to Russia, and noticed under that head; but in truth, the same articles that are carried to Constantinople also go to Teflis, with this difference, that a great quantity of coarse cotton and silk goods are taken by the Georgian merchants, to supply the Caucasian and Tartar tribes within the Russian empire.

Specie.—A large portion of the gold and silver which comes into Persia from the westward, in a way which will hereafter be related, still pursuing an easterly direction, is annually sent to India, in exchange for the valuable commodities furnished by that country. In the year ending 31st May 1821, the official return of specie thus sent, was 34,17,994 new Bombay rupees. The other exports to India are inconsiderable, except in the article of horses, of which sometimes the three presidencies receive a good many. In the above year there appears to have been a considerable shipment of silk to India. I know not if this be common.

Silk.—The quantity of this sent to Bagdad, Constantinople, and their dependencies, has already been stated; it is to be presumed that much of this finds its way to Europe.

Cotton, although so bulky a commodity, finds its way, even from the shores of the Caspian to those of the Levant.

Tobacco has already been noticed as a considerable article in the Bagdad and Turkey trades.

It is unnecessary to make many remarks on the several items of the trade with Bagdad and Turkey; it embraces almost every important article of Persian production, either raw or manufactured; and it is a striking feature in this trade, that so many cumbrous and weighty articles should be able to bear such an expensive and distant land-carriage; it is also curious to see one country purchasing for ready-money from a neighbour, by no means proverbial for its industry, many articles of produce which might as easily be raised at home. Much of the coarser fabrics, both of silk and cotton, must be consumed in the wide provinces of Asia Minor; and it would be curious to learn what the inhabitants of these countries (known to be poor and oppressed) have to give in return for the gold, which they lay out in purchasing these commodities.

It is also interesting to remark the proportion of Indian goods which find their way across the mighty space which intervenes between that country and Asia Minor. Shawls of Cashmere, spices, indigo, and muslins, reach the Bosphorus by this long route, and the lamb-skins of the no less distant Bockhara, are thus found in the bazars of Bagdad and Constantinople.

An intelligent merchant of considerable eminence at Tabreez told me, that if he were about to undertake a speculation to Constantinople, he would carry with him silk, cotton, tobacco, Cashmere shawls, indigo, coffee, and money. The coffee he would sell at Erzeroom, without expecting great profit, to pay the expences of carriage, customs, and other caravan expences.

It is needless to make many remarks on the exports to Bockhara; the trade is not inconsiderable, but it is often interrupted; the only way in which it could probably affect the trade of Persia and Europe would be, by a demand arising for its black lamb-skins, which might be paid for, through the medium of Persian merchants, with European commodities. I fear it is not a probable event, and that it is not in this way that Bockhara and Samarcand must be supplied with our manufactures.

TABLE III.

Of the Imports of PERSIA from various Countries.

Europe.	India.	Turkey, Bagdad, &c.	Arabia.
Woollens; as, Broad-cloths, of various quali- ties Narrow cloths Ladies' do. Cassimeres Camblets Cotton manufac- tured goods; as, Chintzes, Printed cottons Long-cloth Cambric Muslins Veils Silks; as, Velvets Satins Crapes French brocades and embroid- ered goods Shawls, imitation of Cashmere Precious stones and jewellery Enamel	Gold lace Spangles Metal buttons Cutlery Fire-arms Watches Spectacles Spying-glasses Thermometers Barometers Air-guns, Musical snuff-boxes and such toys Leather Earthenware Glassware Medicines (particu- larly patent) Trunks of various sizes Iron Copper Tin Quicksilver Ammonia Cochineal Cream of tartar Verdigrease	Cotton goods; as, Chintzes, Masu- lepatam Do. Moultan Do. Lucnow, &c. Muslins, a few Indigo Spices of all sorts Sugar Sugar-candy Gold and silver stuffs and bro- cades from Be- nares Precious stones Earthenware Shawls from Cash- mere Iron Lead Copper	Specie, in gold and silver European manu- factures brought from the ports of importation in the Levant
			Coffee Pearls Sweetmeats (Hulwah) Pearls Bockhara, and the other Oozbeck States. Black lamb and sheep- skins Camblet, or cloth of camels' hair Coarse silk handker- chiefs Hides (raw) Dried plums (prunes) Lapis lazuli from Bu- duckshan Rubies and other pre- cious stones from the same place Indigo from India Shawls and other Indian produce Cochineal from Russia Chintzes and other Eu- ropean articles brought from Russia China-ware Tea and a few other Chinese goods,

Persia, it is true, is a poor country, and it is but a small part of its population that can afford to indulge in superfluities; still, its increasing acquaintance with Europe and European commodities, has created a desire to possess the conveniencies and luxuries which are brought from thence, so that the consumption of them is extensive, and constantly increasing. The foregoing Table affords a list of the principal imports, some of which merit particular attention; and first, the

*Woollens**, which, not only in Persia, but over all the East, have long been admired, and the demand for which is great and increasing: there is little doubt that if due attention were paid to the tastes of the various eastern nations, and if the price of the commodity could be diminished, either by lessening the charges of transportation, or reducing the original cost, the consumption would be greatly extended. The colours preferred in Persia are fawns, browns, greens, yellows, purples, scarlets, and light colours in general. Blues and blacks are little used; and the lighter qualities of cloth, as ladies' cloth, are, I think, most in request. I saw little, if any, of the finest qualities of broad-cloth: that which might be termed second quality, sold by the piece at from 20 to 24 reals (1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* to 1*l.* 12*s.*) per Persian yard of 39 inches; the next quality at 16 to 18 reals (1*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.* to 1*l.* 4*s.*), and so on. All these cloths are much used by those who can afford them, for bairounies, oemahs, and such articles of Persian dress, as well as many other purposes of luxury and splendour.

Chintzes and printed Cottons are articles that claim particular regard; as, by a judicious attention to feeding the market with good and moderately priced goods, and studying to please the tastes of the people, the consumption might be rendered very large and important.

The consumption of chintzes and printed goods has at all times been great in Persia; but a large quantity of the coarser sorts was fabricated in the country, and all those of finer descriptions were imported from Mazuli-

* Hanway speaks of the consumption of woollens at Mushed and Bockhara, &c., as trifling, yet he quotes, for a year's consumption, 365 pieces of cloths, 37 yards each; 725 of Gloucester cloths, called Maghoot, (rather Mahoot), of 42 yards; a large quantity of ordinary Yorkshires, called Londora, of 3*s.* 6*d.* a-yard; making, at his own quotations, an amount of 14,000*l.* sterling, exclusive of 1000 pieces of shalloons, and 1500 of what he calls long-ells, the value of which is not stated, but which could not be less than from 3000*l.* to 4000*l.* more; and this, exclusive of the finer Dutch cloths, which, he admits, were most admired by the Persians. This statement is said to have been taken from the custom-house register of Mushed, which, unless it was more accurately kept in the days of Nadir Shah than in the present reign, I fear is not much to be depended on. The whole was sent from Resht in Gheelan, by Armenian, Russian, and Greek merchants.

patam, Moultan, Lucnow, Futtigurh, Dehlee, &c. These have now been in great measure superseded by the English, French, and German stuffs, introduced from the ports of the Levant from India, and by way of Russia.

The success of this branch of the trade depends very greatly upon the patterns sent, for fashion in this respect in Persia is to the full as capricious as in Europe, and the inhabitants will reject an excellent article merely because the pattern does not please them, while they give an extravagant price for goods of a very inferior description, merely because their gay colours happen to suit their fancy; for want of attention to this material point, there were hundreds of chests of printed cottons, that had been sent from Bombay, lying at Shiraz and Ispahan, totally unsaleable.

The French and German manufacturers have been much more successful than the English in hitting the Persian taste; no doubt, because they took care to have the best information upon the subject; and every bazar had a full display of their rich and glaring chintzes, while many of our more sober English goods lay neglected on the inner shelves unasked for and unseen. It would not be easy to convey an idea of the kind that would suit the eastern markets, but novelty, united with rich and well-blended colours, seldom fails to please. For some time before I was in Persia, the long, rich, running patterns, resembling striped shawls, were most approved of, and such chintzes, of moderate quality, would fetch from 5 to 8 reals (6s. 8d. to 10s. 8d.) per yard of 39 inches. At the time I was there, these had begun to lose ground, and those patterns which resembled spotted shawls, with larger or smaller pines, upon a black, blue, green, or yellow ground, had the preference.

Culumcars (as they term it), or those chintzes which have a pattern of light and gaily-coloured flowers, wandering over a red, fawn, or light blue ground, and of no great fineness, were sold, according to the beauty of the pattern, from 4 to 6 reals (5s. 4d. to 8s.) a yard of 39 inches.

A favourite article of women's wear was a sort of large handkerchief, from five to six feet square, in imitation of shawl handkerchiefs, printed in rich patterns, usually consisting of a large centre ornament, a border of flowers or pines, and corner ornaments, all rich, with red, green, and yellow colours, upon various grounds; such handkerchiefs would sell at 24 to 30 reals (1l. 11s. to 2l.) a piece. All goods of this sort, except these handkerchiefs, should be glazed. The French and German goods are not glazed.

It is impossible to say what the consumption of these goods in Persia may at present be: the custom-house records are too loose and false to be trusted to, even if access could be had to them; and private opinions varied

so greatly, that I do not venture to give any; it may be observed, that in the year ending 31 May 1821 there were 734 chests of English, and 1650 of Mazulipatam chintzes, imported from India *via* Bushire alone, which must be trifling in proportion to the quantity received *via* Constantinople, Aleppo, Bagdad, Teflis, and the various ports of the Caspian Sea, besides what comes over land from India by the way of Caubul, &c. It has already been observed that the quantity thus imported had alarmed the manufacturers so much that they had petitioned the king to put a stop to the importation; this circumstance alone proves the great increase of the trade. I may add, that though the patterns of the French and German goods were often preferred, that preference was always transferred to the English manufactures, whenever they equally suited the taste of purchasers; and there is little doubt, that if this were more attended to, they would drive the goods of other nations from the market.

White cotton Cloths are not as yet in so much request, nor is it probable that in Persia they ever will, because white linen is not used by its inhabitants. There is, however, a considerable quantity of long-cloth, cambric, and the muslin called jamdanees, required for the female establishments; and the Oozbecks of Bockhara and Khyvah use various sorts of white cottons. Tolerably fine yard-wide shirting sold at 2 reals (2s. 8d.) a Persian yard, and for ten-yard pieces of moderately fine jamdanees I could not obtain more than 20 reals (1l. 6s. 8d.) a piece.

Silk goods.—There is a considerable demand for the finer sorts of these, but it is chiefly supplied by French goods of Lyons manufacture, of which I have seen beautiful samples. I am not prepared to give much information on this branch of the trade, but it appears well worth the attention of government as well as of speculators; for though it may be impossible, under present circumstances, to supply the coarser fabrics so cheap as they can be made in the country, I think their finer stuffs, as dereis, cassubs, alecjahs, tafetas, and handkerchiefs, might, even now, be imitated, and sent to Persia for sale with advantage. We have seen the muslins and cottons of India surpassed in beauty and cheapness by British manufactures, wrought from her own raw material; and it can hardly be deemed chimerical or over sanguine to anticipate that the same triumph of science and skill over mere untutored industry, may again be displayed, and that when the silk trade shall have been freed from the heavy duties that now fetter it, the raw silk of Persia may be returned to that country in a fabricated state, with great advantage to our manufacturers and our trade.

Brocades and embroidery.—These are also supplied by the French; they

are of course entirely articles of high luxury, and, consequently, the demand for them in a poor nation cannot be great. I saw magnificent invoices of these things brought to Teflis, where Persian merchants come to purchase them.

Imitation shawls are very much admired, and might become a large and lucrative branch of trade ; but very great attention should be paid to quality and pattern. Shawls in Persia are chiefly made use of for lining or covering the long loose robes, as barounies, oemahs, &c. as sashes to tie round the waist, or as turbans to wrap round the head ; they seldom wear shawls thrown round the shoulders like the people of India, and require, consequently, but few of what are called long shawls, such as are there used. In making shawls therefore for the Persian market, they should be fabricated both in shape and ornament, with reference to their use. Those which they chiefly admire are richly flowered all over, or spotted with pines of great or less size on a rich ground, as black, blue, green, yellow, crimson, or scarlet. A few of the striped patterns are liked, but the former are the best.

Square shawl-handkerchiefs are also required for the ladies ; these should have a handsome center ornament, surrounded with happy devices, and rich corner ornaments, with a border to match.

But the material and texture of these shawls is of great importance. Silk and cotton form a beautiful fabrick, but it is deficient in warmth ; and if wool of sufficient fineness could be obtained to afford that desideratum, and provided the difference in price still continued very great, these imitations would go far to supply the place of the Cashmere shawls. For this purpose, I cannot help thinking, that the wool of Kerman, particularly of that sort called *khoolk*, would answer remarkably well.

One objection to the imitation shawls is, the rough and ragged appearance of their wrong sides ; if this could be made more to resemble the real shawls, it would tend greatly to increase their sale. I obtained for two English shawls ten yards long, by forty-three inches broad, of a rich striped pattern, only 100 reals a-piece, (6*l*. 13*s*. 4*d*.) ; but the real market-price was at least twenty reals more ; these cost forty rupees each in Bombay.

Gold lace, buttons, cutlery, &c. are sold to a very considerable amount, and the demand is extending. It must be remembered, that it is not plain and good, but shewy, even though flimsy articles, that catch the taste in Persia. Sportsmen's knives, scissors of fancy shapes, and such like brilliant articles from Birmingham and Sheffield, would doubtless sell, if judiciously selected. Highly finished and expensive goods would never pay.

Fire-arms. A few guns and pistols shewily got up, of fair, but not expensive quality, might yield a good profit; but no Persian would give the first cost for any fowling-piece of our best makers. Double barrels, not exceeding 9*l.* or 10*l.* a-piece, might answer well. Pistols should be long in the barrel, and ornamented with silver wire and mounting.

Spying-glasses, watches, musical snuff-boxes, and such toys, are very much liked, and if showy and not dear would probably sell. Such fancy articles are, however, at least dangerous, for if the king or princes, or other great men do not choose to purchase them, they become a dead loss, at the same time a judicious occasional investment might do well.

Glass-ware is not in great demand in Persia; the habits of the people do not require it. Callicoons bottoms are among the only things used, and Russia furnishes these. Their own manufactures supply them with coarser articles, as bottles, phials, carboys.

Earthen-ware. I have no particular knowledge of the kinds that pay, but as there is a good deal imported from China itself, by the way of Bockhara and India, I have no doubt that coffee and tea-cups, plates, and dishes, &c. of showy but not very expensive British China, would answer well; it surely could be imported cheaper than that from China.

Medicines of European composition are not much used by the native physicians, but a few of the patent medicines and cordials, as essence of peppermint, cherry-brandy, and other liquors under that name, and I dare say De Verno's Vegetable Syrop, and Dr. Solomon's Balm of Gilead would answer extremely well.

The metals being heavy for land carriage, will always be more advantageously imported by Russia; but they come from India both by land and sea. The steel of India is greatly preferred to any other. Iron is made in several parts of Persia, but foreign metal is much preferred. It is to be remembered that iron is a metal comparatively but little used in these countries.

Copper in sheets is much used, being, I believe, principally imported from Russia, but partly from India. Tin and a little toothernague are sent from the latter place also.

Cochineal is an article of dyeing stuff greatly used in spite of its high price in Persia. Hitherto it has chiefly been sent by Russia, and has sold as high as 150 tomanes per pood of 40*lbs.* (about 2*l.* to 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* a pound English); it was as low as 100 tomanes when I was in the country; probably it might be afforded a good deal cheaper, if sent direct from the importing countries, in which case the demand would increase, as the dye is very much admired.

Indigo, which comes entirely from India, is consumed to a great and increasing amount. It comes chiefly by sea, *via* Bushire, but also finds its way across the country by Caubul and Balkh, to Bockhara, and from thence, or by Herat to Persia. Nearly 1100 chests of 250lbs. each, were imported *via* Bushire in the year ending 31st May 1821.

Spices form a branch of considerable consequence among Indian imports; but they are not extensively consumed in Persia, so that it will not probably increase.

Sugar and *Sugar Candy* form one of the most important branches of the trade between India and Persia; indeed, although Mazunderan yields a coarse sugar, and there is a little I believe produced in Kuzistan, and the low country about the Karoon and Tigris; and though I believe the Russians may import a little refined sugar, the chief supply of this great article of Persian consumption comes from India. It is a curious fact that a country which consumes so much of this article and possesses so much soil fitted for its growth should continue to be dependent upon foreign countries for its supply.

Black Lamb and *Sheep Skins* form a chief and very important article of trade between Persia and Bockhara. Since the commencement of the present king's reign, the nation has adopted the black lamb-skin cap which was the peculiar head-dress of his tribe (the Kadjers), and so nice are some persons of great taste in this article of dress, that they will only wear caps made of skins taken from unborn lambs, as having a shorter and finer fur than any others. A cap of this sort will sometimes cost as high as 24 reals (32 shillings). These skins are also used in lining barounies and pelisses for winter wear, and might probably, if introduced into this country, become fashionable as a beautiful and comfortable fur.

Coffee is, I believe, entirely brought from Arabia by the ports of the Gulf. I do not know if any attempt has been made to introduce that article from other quarters.

Specie. Persia itself possesses no mines of the precious metals, and yet there is not only an abundant supply of currency in the country, but a very large sum* is annually exported to India in return for the produce required from thence. It becomes an interesting subject of enquiry, how a country apparently so poor as Persia is, becomes possessed of so great a quantity of the representative of riches. To discuss the subject at large would perhaps occupy too

* In the year ending 31st of May 1821, the export of bullion in various coins was, in New Bombay rupees, 34,17994; in sterling money about 290,000*l*.

much space and time; I will therefore state as shortly as I am able the result of my enquiries.

It appears, in the first place, that the indigenous exports of Persia, though little in proportion to her extent of surface, do in reality greatly exceed her imports. Her silk, her cotton, her grain, and her manufactures, form an aggregate of great value, for the greater part of which she is paid in specie by the consumers at Bagdad, Aleppo, Constantinople, and the other cities of the Turkish empire, as well as by the Russians from Astracan and Teflis.

It must also be held in remembrance, that a large proportion of the valuable Indian produce which enters Persia, is re-exported to the countries west of it, and thus returns with interest the specie of which it drained the kingdom for a time.

We see a variety of coins current in Persia; French and German crowns and Spanish dollars are brought in large quantities from Bagdad, but seldom pass into circulation, being for the most part transmitted by sea to India. Golden ducats and silver manēts*, which form the medium of traffic on the frontiers with Turkey and Georgia, are poured in from these quarters as well as from Astracan. It is stated, that the Georgian merchants trading between Teflis and Tabreez alone, bring annually 300,000 ducats in gold to the latter city. The remittances made to the Russian mission there are in the same coin. Nor is there a small addition made to the aggregate by the rich ecclesiastical establishment at Euch Ecclesia, the seat of the Armenian church, which receives large revenues, both obligatory and voluntary, from Russia, Turkey, Persia, and India, all of which are paid in foreign coin.

Thus a large current of the precious metals flows annually into Persia; and though the greater proportion passes on to the eastward, there still remains a very sufficient quantity to form the currency of the country, the treasury of the king, and the hoards of the few rich individuals in the kingdom. Much of the gold remains current under its original form of ducats; the rest is coined into tomauns; the silver is all coined into reals; the manēts being only current in the western parts of the kingdom bordering on Turkey and the Russian territories.

* The manēt, or silver rouble, is worth about two reals; three^a and a trifle, varying, according to circumstances, are worth a golden ducat.

TABLE IV.

Russian Commerce with PERSIA, KHYVAH, and BOCKHARA.

PERSIA.		BOCKHARA.		KHYVAH.	
Exports to	Imports from	Exports to	Imports from	Exports to	Imports from
Woollen goods, broad-cloths, &c. chiefly English and German	Raw silk	Chintzes and printed cottons	Silk stuffs, coarse	Chintzes and printed cottons	Silk, raw
Chintzes, do. do.	Do. cotton	Cotton cloths, white, of different qualities	Cotton, raw	Do. stuffs,	Cotton
Cotton cloths, white, of various qualities	Rice	Woollen cloths, chiefly English	Cotton stuffs, coarse	Cotton cloths, white, of various sorts	Do. stuffs, coarse
Jeans of various qualities	Grain	Hardware, various	Black lamb-skins	Woollens, English	Silk stuffs,
Shawls (imitation)	Timber	Cutlery, knives, sword blades, scissors, &c.	Lapis lazuli	Gold and silver lace	Hides, raw
Gold and silver lace	Tobacco	Muskets and pistols	Rubies	Hardware and cutlery	And the produce of Bockhara
Paper in great quantities	Hides, raw	Cochineal	Toorquoises	Muskets and pistols	
Leather (Russian)	Lamb-skins	Glass ware	Old gems and coins gathered near Bockhara	Glassware	
Glass ware	Fish	Furs	Hydes, raw	Furs	
Looking-glasses	Naptha	Iron	Shawls from India	Iron	
Cochineal	Gall-nuts	Steel		Lead	
Tea things, urns, &c.	Grape treacle	Lead		Copper	
Tea-trays, painted, of tin or paper	Drugs	Copper		Steel	
Boxes, ornamented, of the same material	Toorquoises	Brass		Quicksilver	
Coarse cutlery	Kerman shawls	Quicksilver		Paper	
Iron	Silk goods	Plated goods		Gold in ducats	
Steel	Cotton do.	Gold and silver embroidery			
Copper in sheets	Gold and silver brocades	Copper wire, gilt or plated			
Quicksilver	<i>Foreign produce.</i>	Vermillion			
Furs	Cashmere shawls	Coral			
Small wooden trunks bound with iron, either plain or ornamented	Indigo and other Indian produce	Refined sugar			
Tea from China	Pearls	Paper, white and blue			
Ducats (gold)					
Manets (silver)					

The Russian government has, for a long time past, held paramount sway over the Caspian Sea : there is indeed no rival in its vicinity to dispute this power with them, and they use every means to insure its continuance, by

extending upon all occasions the limits of their dominion, and their influence along its margin, nor will they be satisfied until the whole of its shores and ports be brought within the Russian empire.

The exclusive possession of this inland sea, is of two-fold importance to them. It affords the surest means of forwarding their ambitious political objects, and it gives them the monopoly of a very lucrative commerce.

It would neither be amusing nor useful to follow out the progress of Russian commerce with Persia and the Oozbec states from its first commencement; the little information that has been obtained relates to its present state, which is all that is now interesting.

The internal navigation afforded by the mighty river Volga, which penetrates from the Caspian into the very heart of Russia, and serves to convey its produce and manufactures to Astracan, enables them to supply all the countries on the borders of that sea, particularly with heavy articles, and to take returns in their produce, at rates with which no other nation can ever compete; and it can only be owing to the inferiority of their own manufactures, and the necessity which they are under of supplying themselves from England or France with goods for the Persian market, that the trade in general has hitherto continued so limited. While, however, the Russians continue thus the carriers of British goods upon the Caspian, the latter, by being placed in a situation of easy access (the manner of which will hereafter be pointed out), will receive all the benefit they ever can enjoy.

The shipping employed in the trade between Astracan and Persia, does not, as far as I could learn, exceed twelve vessels of from fifty to one hundred tons, six or seven of which being old, are exclusively confined to the fishing trade, carrying to Astracan the sturgeon cured on the coasts of Gheelan and Mazunderan. The rest convey the Russian commodities to Resht, Lahajan, Balfroosh, and Astrabad; and carry back the returns in Persian produce. The owners of these vessels are chiefly Russians or Mahometan merchants, settled at Astracan, who have agents at the Persian towns; but few of the Persian merchants are ship owners.

I found it quite impossible to arrive at any rational estimate of the value either of exports or imports. One or two respectable merchants at Balfroosh stated it as their opinion, that the former was equal to 200,000 tomauns annually, while the latter did not amount in goods to more than the half; but if any credit was to be given to the particulars which they gave me of the trade, this must be underrating both exceedingly; for if the exports be as I was informed, they would amount to at least 400,000 tomauns (nearly 214,000*l.* sterling) as follows:—

Silk, 18,000 mauns Shahee, say at 80 reals a maun *	-	180,000
Cotton, 8000 poods, at about 7 reals a pood	-	7,000
Kherboz (coarse cottons) 200,000 pieces, at 1½ reals	-	40,000
Kudduc, chintz, and Ispahan stripe, a large quantity of each	-	90,000
Silk manufactured goods of Ispahan and Yezd, and embroidery, say	-	40,000
Rice, 12,000 khurwars, at 10 reals	-	15,000
Grain, say	-	10,000
Sundries	-	18,000
Total	-	400,000

In this sketch estimate, all but the silk applies to Mazunderan alone; but let it include the exports of both that and Gheelan, even then we have a large value of goods.

That the imports are not less underrated, may appear from this circumstance alone, that upwards of 200,000 poods of iron, and at least 3000 poods of steel, the former at 3 to 4 reals, the latter at 8 reals a pood, forming an amount of near 90,000 tomauns (48,000*l.*) in two articles alone, are annually imported into Resht and Balfroosh. It will also be sufficiently clear, from a glance at the nature of the articles in the Table of Exports and Imports, and the above data, that the surplus remaining to be paid in cash by the Russians must be very considerable; and this is really the case, as has been remarked in what has been said respecting the influx of specie into Persia; they annually bring a large number of ducats and manēts, to exchange for the produce they take away.

The other exports to Russia do not require many observations. Those which have been noticed above are of by far the greatest consequence.

Grain, like rice, is taken in when cheap, to fill up with.

Timber, tobacco, raw hides, lamb-skins, gall-nuts, grape treacle, drugs, form only occasional shipments, and are partly brought from other places.

Toorquoises chiefly go by the way of Bockhara, from Mushed.

* The price varies from year to year. I was told that of late they had paid for it 100 reals per maun Shahee. Hanway observes, that in his time it was as high as 40 crowns, or about 80 reals per batman of 12 lbs English; I have taken it lower, — 80 reals per maun Shahee would be about 7*s.* 4*d.* per pound English.

Silk goods, such as dereis, cassubs, tafetas, &c. are often sent to a great extent and value.

Gold and silver brocades, the manufactures of Cashān and Ispahan, likewise form a considerable article of export.

Of the goods imported from Russia, those of principal importance have already been adverted to in speaking of European imports in general.

Metals. Iron, steel, copper, quicksilver, form a very large proportion of the whole, both in bulk and value.

Woollens and cotton goods. The observations already made on these supersede the necessity of any further here. As they are chiefly, if not all, from England, Germany, and France, they must be imported at a greatly enhanced expence, and probably of inferior quality to those which these nations might themselves supply direct.

Paper. The greater part of this article which is used in Persia is supplied from Russia. The most of it is tinted blue, and is of foolscap size, but coarser.

Furs. A considerable quantity of these are annually sent to Persia, either from Astracan or Teflis. The consumption of them in articles of dress by the Persian nobility is very large. The fitch, sable, and grey squirrel-skins are most in use.

Leather. The true Russian leather is imported in considerable quantities. The price is generally at the rate of 12 tomanas for 10 skins.

Of the Russian commerce with the states on the east of the Caspian, I am not prepared to say a great deal, nor do I think it can as yet be very considerable. The natives of Bockhara are doubtless rich for Asiatics, and able to purchase articles of luxury to a certain amount; but the transport of goods, whether by land or sea, must so greatly enhance their value, as very much to restrict the disposable quantity.

Goods are sent from Astracan to Bockhara and Khyvah, both by land and sea. Two caravans in the year are, I understand, the extent of the communication by the former, and the route is so long, and subject to so many dangers, that no considerable trade could be thus carried on. The trade by sea is brought from Astracan to Maugushluc; but I could not learn how many vessels are engaged in it. When any of these arrive, intimation is speedily conveyed to Khyvah, whence the traders resort to the coast, make their bargains, and dispose of their produce. The distance between the bay of Maugushluc and Khyvah is ten days' journey, of twenty-five miles each; that to Bockhara from Khyvah, from seven to ten more; so

that the land carriage of goods to the former place, after being landed on the shores of the Caspian is no such serious matter.

Thus, inconsiderable though the present amount of this trade may be, it is understood to be on the increase; and there appears to be rational grounds for believing, that, by judicious management, it may be largely extended. The population of the countries to which this may be considered as the port of entrance, though small in comparison with their superficial extent, is numerically great, and there are many rich and populous oases in the surrounding waste. If these should advance in civilization, if artificial wants could be created among them, they might become great consumers of European fabricks: these, Russia must supply herself with from the chéapest markets, until the distant period may come when her own manufactures shall rival those of England, France, or Germany. Thus she will become the carrier only to these nations, and they will reap the benefit of the inland navigation of the Caspian, without the risk of so distant a commerce.

Nothing would lead so much to widen this commercial field, as the conquest of Khyvah by the Russians, an object they most certainly have in view, and in which it will be very difficult, even were it deemed expedient, to prevent their succeeding. That the possession of such a depôt on the eastern bank of the Caspian would be a most important, a gigantic step towards any design they may be forming against our Eastern possessions, cannot be denied, and it would be for our legislators to determine, how far it might be possible or politic to oppose it, or whether the good to be derived from the spread of civilization, commerce, and security to person and property, that would to a certain degree surely follow such a measure, might not sufficiently compensate for the uncertain and remote danger which its success might be supposed to involve.

That the Turkish empire, and some of the western states of Asia, have for a long time past been supplied through the ports of the Levant with a large quantity of English goods, is sufficiently well known. It is equally notorious, that our trade with the East Indies has been the means of transmitting a portion of British manufactures to more distant Asiatic countries. But the nature and extent of that great revolution in our Eastern commerce, by which the balance of trade has been entirely changed, and India receives from Britain a greater value in manufactures than her own raw produce serves to repay, is, perhaps, not so generally known, although the fact which

it exhibits, of Britain no longer receiving from India the manufactures in which the latter once excelled, but returning, with great advantage, her own raw material in a manufactured state, after a voyage of near 30,000 miles, affords a proof of the triumph of machinery and science, over mere manual dexterity, the most complete that can be conceived.

This new era in our Indian trade has had a powerful effect over the central and eastern quarters of Asia. All those parts which are accessible by sea have now an opportunity of supplying themselves, at moderate rates, with British goods, which thus make their way into the remotest countries. The woollens of Yorkshire clothe the nobles of Khorasan, and the cottons of Manchester and Glasgow are to be found in the bazars of Bockhara, Samarcand, and Kokaun.

This trade is, however, as yet in its infancy, a taste for European goods is but arising ; it requires to be fed gradually and judiciously, until it become matured into a steady and regular demand. To do this it is necessary to become acquainted with the wants and habits of the people, and to remove, where it may be practicable, the obstacles which the trade has to contend with. Riches are more sparingly distributed among the people of Asia than in Europe, so that the lower orders cannot be expected to become great consumers of foreign and expensive goods ; but even these, though frugal and parsimonious on their own persons, delight to adorn their women with the pittance they can save from the grasp of their lords, or the daily necessities of their families. The higher classes, on the contrary, are to the full as expensive for their means, and as fond of display, as those of other countries, and quite willing to spend their own substance, or even to accumulate debt, for purposes of luxury and magnificence. Thus, though the kingdoms of Asia be neither rich nor populous, in proportion to their natural resources or extent, they might undoubtedly become consumers of a vast quantity of British goods, provided these were supplied to them of a description and at prices suited to their tastes and means.

The obstacles to providing such a supply are many, and some of them such, that it is only from time and the enterprizing spirit of adventure we can look for a remedy. But the principal difficulty consists in the long and expensive land-carriage which must in many instances be borne ; the heavy and frequently arbitrary imposts to which goods are subject in their transit through the dominions of various sovereigns ; and the risk of partial or total loss from the attacks of robbers, or the rapacious demands of hungry and tyrannical chiefs. These are evils which cannot be remedied until the progress of civilization and knowledge shall have extended over these lands,

improved the constitution of their governments so as to yield encouragement and security to commerce, and taught them to avail themselves of their natural resources, so as to lessen the charge of transport. This period, even in the view of the most sanguine, must be considered as very far distant.

A single example will serve to illustrate the force of these obstacles. A considerable proportion of the European goods which reach Persia are brought from Constantinople, by the way of Erzeroom and Erivan, the frontier town of Persia. The distance from the Turkish capital to the latter place is little short of 1200 miles; from Erivan to Tabreez is 200; from thence to Tehran, the present capital of Persia, about 360; forming a total land-carriage of at least 1760 miles.

I do not know the exact expence of mule-carriage on that road, but judging by the charges in other quarters, it cannot be less than at the rate of two tomauns, or sixteen reals per mule load for 300 miles, which would give within a trifle of 190 reals for freight alone. Neither am I acquainted with the exact number or amount of duties that are levied between Constantinople and Erivan, though I have heard of at least five, which are regulated only by the will of the respective chiefs; from the imperfect data we have, however, we may now estimate the charges incident to goods carried from Constantinople to Tehran.

Suppose a mule load of European goods valued at Persian reals 500

1760 miles land-carriage about - - - 190

Five duties between Constantinople and Erivan,

say at 3 per cent. each; 15 per cent. on 500 75

Duty at Erivan on entrance per mule load - 5

— Sheroor - - - - 1 5

— Nuksheevan - - - - 3 15

— Moraund - - - - 3 15

— Tabreez on entry - - - - 2 10

— — and on the value, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. - 12 8

— — on quitting - - - - 2 10

— Miana - - - - 2 10

— Zunjoon - - - - 3 15

— Kasvçen - - - - 5

— Tehran on entry - - - - 3 15

————— 311 13

—————
811 13
—————

Thus, independent of all risks of total or partial loss, the charges of carriage and duty alone, and upon the lowest calculation, amount nearly to 65 per cent. of the cost, upon a moderately valued mule-load of European goods.

A large quantity of British goods, particularly cottons, are imported *via* Bushire, from whence they are conveyed to all the Southern cities of Persia, as Shiraz, Yezd, Kerman, Ispahan; from whence they find their way still further inland, supplying Irak, Khorasan, and even the further regions of Tartary. But it must be remembered, that these goods have to bear the expences incident to a voyage from Europe to Bombay, and thence again to Bushire, with one, if not two profits, before they reach the consignee at the latter port, who, in his turn, must have his profit before they are sent further. After this, although they have neither the length of transit nor risks incident to a journey from Constantinople, they must be carried over lofty mountains, by dangerous and execrable roads, before they can reach even the first market, and become liable to heavy transit duties at every town they pass through.

It may not be possible to remove the obstacles incident to the trade carried on between India and the countries to the north-west of it; it must run in the usual and natural channels; a part finding its way up the navigable rivers of India will be brought by the overland routes through Caubul, Candahār, and Herat, or Balkh and Bockhara; but a still larger portion will doubtless continue to be poured in through Bushire and Bassora. And though these channels may be occasionally interrupted by the disturbed state of a kingdom or province, the benefit resulting from the trade will insure to it a certain degree of protection, until time shall bring wisdom and permanent improvement.

It is the western branch of this commerce which must be the most considerable, that chiefly demands attention, and appears capable of being greatly extended and improved by judicious assistance. The great point is to lighten land-carriage, and get rid both of heavy imposts and great risks; and it appears clear that both might be effected by carrying all goods intended for these markets through the Bosphorus at once, without touching at Constantinople, to some port nearer the object in view, upon the Black Sea. There are two of these, which, from what I have heard of them, appear suited for this purpose—Trebizond and Redout Kaleh, both situated at the western extremity of the Black Sea. The first has, I believe, a tolerable harbour, and is already a place of some trade. Its distance from Erzeroum is only about 140 miles, and there is but one duty levied all the way to Erivan. The road, indeed, leads over very rugged mountains, but not

worse than many in Persia, through the passes of which much traffic is constantly carried on, while it shortens the land-carriage by more than 800 miles. I have heard this route proposed to more than one intelligent Persian merchant, and they all agreed, that, if goods were sent at once to Trebizond, it would tend greatly to increase the consumption of them in Persia, and soon tempt Persian merchants to settle there, to which at present there is no inducement.

The second, Redout Kaleh, appears to combine still greater advantages, inasmuch as it not only offers a passage through a safe country, free from imposts the whole way to the borders of Persia, but opens a direct trade with the Russian city of Teflis, the capital of Georgia, and thereby with the countries bordering on the Caspian Sea. It is as yet nothing more than a Russian military post, situated near the Turkish harbour of Poti, at the mouth of the Phasis. Circumstances, such as an advantageous commercial arrangement with the Turks, or the settlement there of Persian merchants, might give to British vessels the use of this harbour; but otherwise, it were perhaps more advisable that ships should be prepared for lying in the open roadstead at Redout Kaleh, and landing their cargoes there.

For this purpose vessels should be manned with a few additional hands, furnished with plenty of the best ground tackle, and provided with a stout long-boat, not drawing more than three feet and a half of water, as there is a bar over which it is necessary to pass; they should be good sailers, that, in case of a gale coming on, they may put to sea. If the wind blow from the north-west, they may run for the Turkish port of Balloon, thirty miles to the southward; if from the south-west, they may easily fetch Sohoom Kaleh, belonging to the Russians, and both good harbours; so that the danger of lying in an open roadstead becomes much diminished. They should have a few guns to alarm the Abassees, a piratical tribe who live upon the coast of Immeretia and Mingrelia. A pilot acquainted with the navigation of the Black Sea might be had at Constantinople.

The distance from Redoubt Kaleh to Teflis, the capital of Georgia, is but 230 miles; the road, at present by no means bad, is in the course of improvement under direction of the Russian authorities there, and the expence of carriage for that distance was stated, upon good authority to me, to be at the moderate rate of 12s. sterling per cwt.

Teflis itself is fast rising from the ruinous condition in which the Russians received it, to be a thriving commercial place; and General Yermoloff, the governor-general of that large district, with a liberality of judgment

which does him honour, has given and continues to hold out every possible encouragement to trade. The port is declared free to all goods upon payment of an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. at the Russian custom-house, nor is there any other impost levied within their territories.

Caravans regularly go and come between Teflis and Tabreez, making out the journey with ease in 18 or 20 days through a safe country; thus shortening the land carriage nearly as much as in the route by Trebezond, with the advantage of a safer and better road, and moderate fixed duties.

The distance from Teflis to Badkoh in Sheerwan is about 500 wersts, or 360 English miles, along the whole of which there is a road for carts, and on which the expence of carriage does not exceed that from Redoubt Kaleh: thus a communication, neither difficult nor expensive, is opened for British goods to reach the shores of the Caspian.

If the advantage to be derived from a trade in this quarter were limited to the supply of Georgia and the Russian territories annexed to that government, that alone would be no mean object, if we consider the extent of country, some of it not ill peopled, which it contains, and the large civil and military establishment to which it gives employment, the whole of which must receive its supplies from foreign sources. Fourteen millions of roubles are annually dispatched from the mother country for the pay of this establishment, the whole of which is expended in Georgia; and the only manner in which a portion of it ever returns, is in payment of goods which are brought from the fair of Macarief (or Nyse Novogorod), by the merchants of Teflis, and which are transported by them at an enormous expence across the Caucasus to that place. Clothing for the troops, both officers and men, provisions of various sorts, sugar, rum, &c. partly the manufacture of Russia, and partly of Germany and England, introduced under heavy duties and charges, and thus greatly enhanced in value, are in this manner supplied to the consumers in Georgia, who complain loudly of the ruinous prices they are forced to pay. Were these supplies imported by English merchants by way of Redoubt Kaleh, nearly the whole of this sum in hard cash would be received by them in exchange, and so far would the Russian authorities be from discouraging this, that I have heard from good authority they would willingly contract with any respectable English merchant for clothing and furnishing the whole army in that quarter, amounting to 80,000 men, and yield him all possible encouragement besides. Indeed they seem fully impressed with the advantages that would result to this part of the empire from Teflis becoming

a great entrepot of trade, and it only remains to hope that these liberal and sound views may continue, and their efforts be confined with respect to the future by sufficient commercial arrangements between the countries.

The supply of the province is not, however, by any means the chief end to be looked forward to in constituting Teflis a magazine of British goods. It should be the source from whence Persia and all the countries near the Caspian Sea may be supplied with these; and in this respect should supersede Astracan, with all its advantages. Were those goods which are suited to the markets of Persia to be found at Teflis as cheap and abundantly as it has been proved they might be sent there, not a merchant from the northern and western parts of that country would go elsewhere; and their purchases would increase in proportion to the cheapness of the goods and security of the transit. Already something of this has commenced; the merchants of Teflis, who but a few years ago were poor wretched pedlars in a ruinous town, have become possessed of capital, and can afford to lay in stocks of goods. Persian merchants, attracted by the few cargoes which have been brought by French and English adventurers from Constantinople and Odessa, are now resorting to it, and Persian produce has been brought to its bazars.

Several cargoes of European manufactured goods had already reached Teflis, and had been sold to realise a great profit. Woollen cloths, cotton, printed and plain goods, some hardware articles, a quantity of rum, and refined sugar, formed the bulk of the English invoices. Silk and cotton manufactures of Lyons, embroideries, cloths, &c. of the French; and it was mortifying for a British subject to observe, that the latter nation was fast occupying the ground on which his own countrymen might so advantageously have stood, and reaping the profits which they might have enjoyed. For one English there were at least three or four French investments brought to market; and it was plain that they knew better how to make their selections than we, for while their invoices were wholly disposed of, a great proportion of English goods remained unsold; this was particularly the case in their chintzes, printed cottons, and imitation shawls; they were more lively, better executed, and pleased the natives much better than ours.

The French government had, indeed, paid considerable attention to this commercial opening; it had probably been brought strongly into their view by the Chevalier de Gamba, an active speculative person, who has been established consul there, and who has also obtained from the Russian government, a large grant of very fine land in Immeretia, where it is said

he means to attempt improving the quality of the wine, and from the produce of which he even now derives a considerable revenue.

It will no doubt be asked, how the returns or remittances in such a trade are to be made; and this for a time would be a matter of some anxiety. The cash sent by the Russian government to Georgia would form a considerable part at first, and the country itself supplies some sources. The provinces on the Caspian make silk, the quantity of which would be greatly increased, and the quality improved, by demand. The rivers of Georgia swarm with sturgeon, the caviare, as well as the isinglass of which are of great value. The wines of the country might form another object; they are good, and might be improved. The forests of Immeretia and Mingrelia abound with boxwood, sycamore, oak, walnut, and other valuable timber, the access to which is tolerably easy. Wax and honey are produced, and many other products would, by degrees, offer themselves. The produce of Persia would, per force, find its way to Teflis in return for the European commodities it would receive instead of specie as now, and would furnish returns for that portion of the trade. Besides, it is to be remembered, that this trade, like all others, must be gradual in its progress, and that, in proportion as it advances, so will the resources of the country be gradually developed, and become at least equal to provide for its wants.

THE END.

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